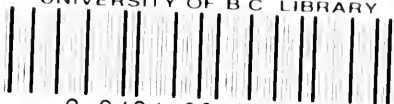


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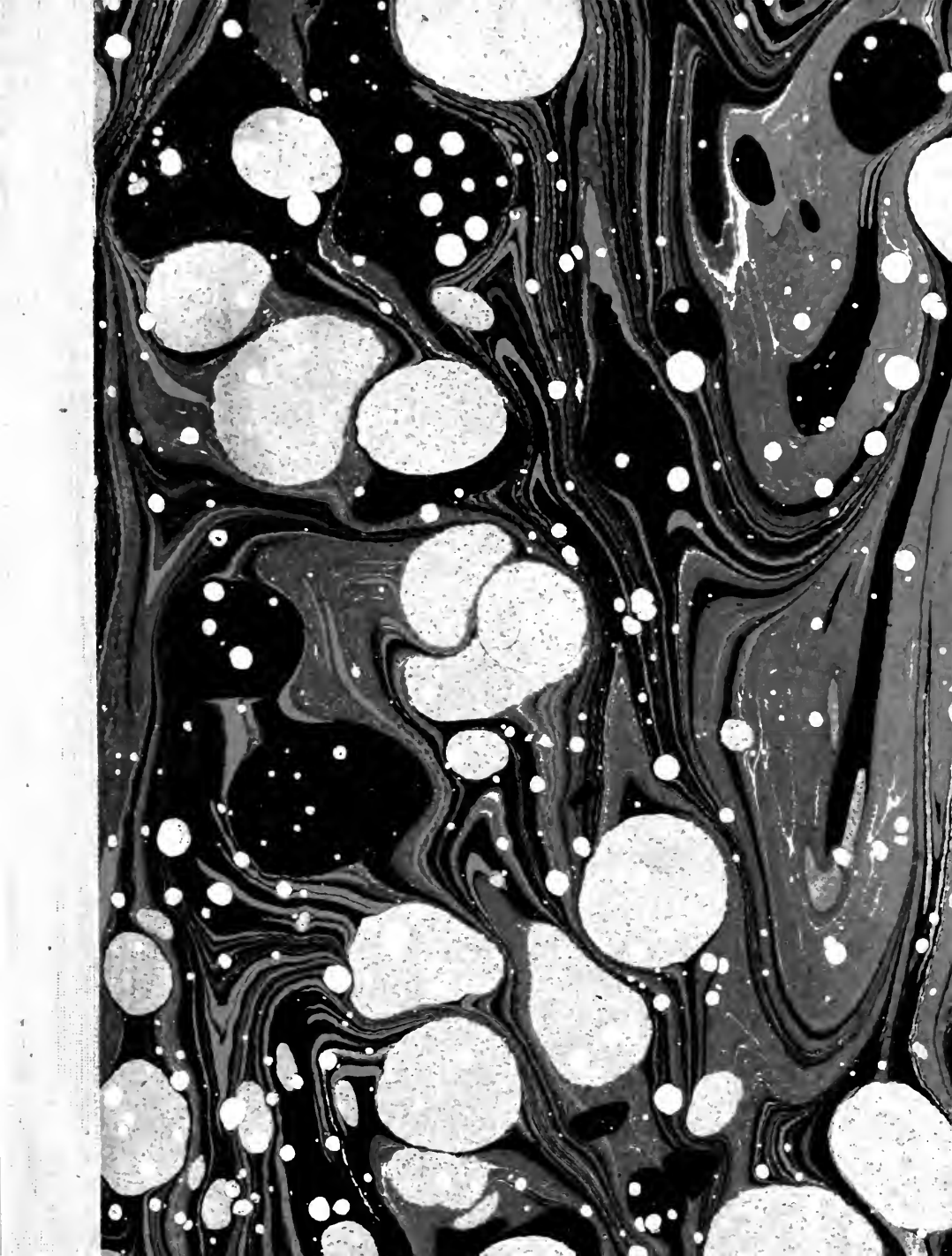
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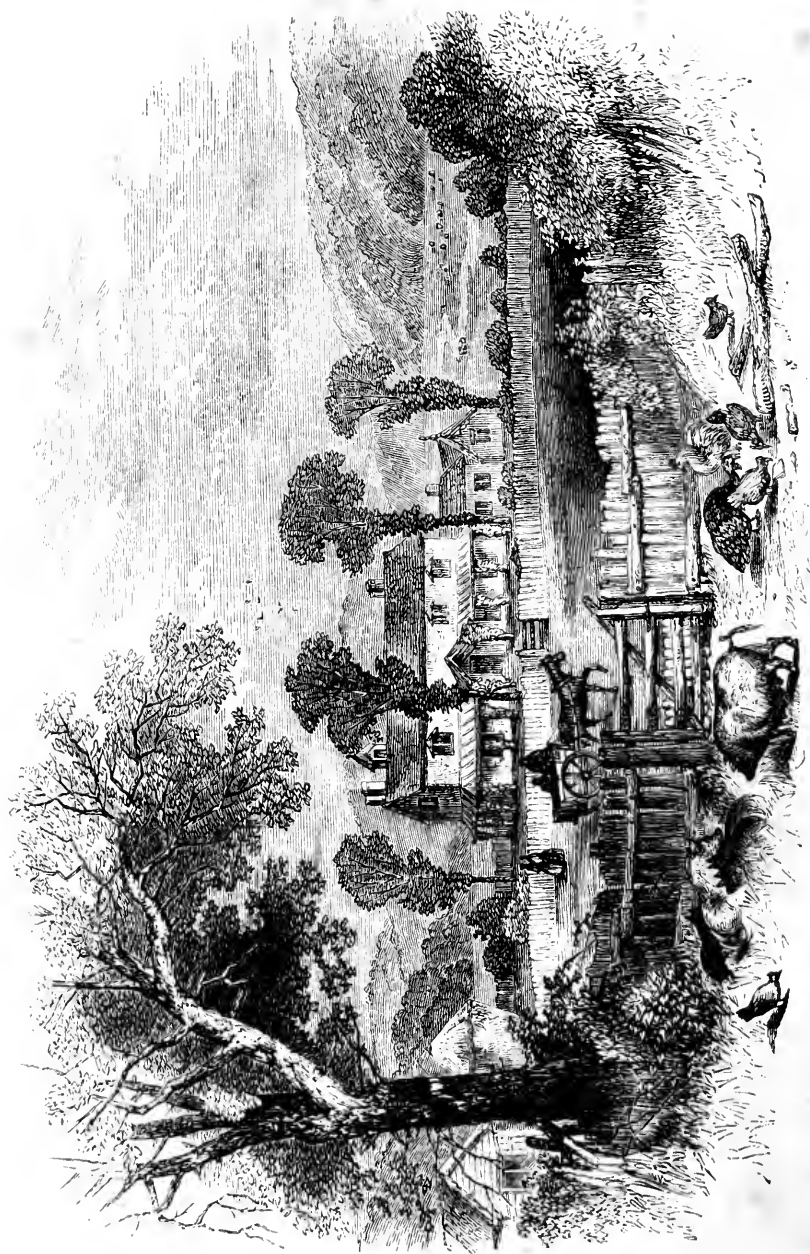
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BROOK FARM.

BROOK FARM :

THE AMUSING AND MEMORABLE

OF

American Country Life.

LONDON :

WERTHEIM, MACINTOSH, AND HUNT,

24, PATERNOSTER-ROW,

AND 23, HOLLES-STREET, CAVENDISH-SQUARE.

1859.

LONDON :
WERTHEIM, MACINTOSH, AND HUNT,
24, PATERNOSTER-ROW,
AND 23, HOLLES-STREET, CAVENDISH-SQUARE.

TO

CHARLES P. WAINWRIGHT, ESQ.,

OF THE MEADOWS, RHINEBECK, NEW YORK, U.S.,

These Reminiscences

OF A BOYHOOD, OF WHICH HE WAS

THE GENIAL COMPANION,

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

As much for his own recreation, as for that of his immediate circle, the Author has whiled leisure hours in reproducing the scenes which were traced on his memory during the most impressible years of life. — So vivid is his recollection of them, that the transcript has been a pure pleasure. He ventures to give them a wider circulation, in the belief that they will at least entertain many who have kindly listened to him when he has addressed them more seriously.

He begs that they may be taken for what they profess to be—mere sketches

of the salient points of American Farm life—the “bits of Nature” which fastened themselves on a youthful imagination.

For obvious reasons some of the names are fictitious, but the narratives are truthful, both in their sunshine and their shadows.

May they carry sunshine, and help to clear away shadows, wherever they go!

LONDON,

May, 1859.

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BROOK FARM.

THE FARM.

BROOK FARM—the scene of all but two or three of the following sketches—covered some 200 acres of the State of New York. It lay about seven miles east of the Hudson, and within an easy drive of the border of Connecticut. The reader of Cooper's admirable tale of the "Spy" will be pleased to hear that the noted house where the four roads met, was within a quarter of an hour's walk of us, and, in my time, was the residence of our butcher, who was also Captain-Generalissimo of the militia of the district.—We will not mention his name, because he served us with

such tough mutton sometimes, and fined us so heavily when we refused to turn out on parade days.

Brook Farm was exceedingly retired, for, though a public road ran through it, it was only a cross-road, and often not more than a couple of vehicles would go by in the course of the day. The soil was of every variety—bog, sand, loam, clay. There was granite in abundance both above and below (as our ploughshares knew to their cost), and in one field a vein of white marble cropped out.—A mile higher up it was worked in quarries, and many of the principal buildings in a neighbouring city came out thence.—I have counted thirty yoke of cattle dragging a single column to its metropolitan destination. Our farm scenery was quietly lovely. Half of it lay in valley, surrounded with wooded hills; the other half was higher, and spread away in table-land till it joined other farms. This table-land was cut up into corn-fields, orchards, and grass, whilst the valley part consisted of a large cleared swamp, with a brook meandering through it. Mid-way this swamp narrowed, and then opened

again in a long reach of river meadow, bounded by the Aquehung, the chief river of the county,—here a stream of twenty feet width, completely hidden by a belt of trees—(more of the Aquehung by-and-bye). We had our own slice of wood on the hill, well-timbered with hickory and oak, and underbrushed with juniper, cedars, and wild laurel.

The House,—abutting on the road, rose on the slope, about a hundred yards from the brook bridge. On the opposite side of the road, standing back somewhat, were a cider-mill, and cow and waggon sheds, overhung by a huge black walnut. To the left of these, running down to the brook, was the kitchen-garden; beyond them were the orchards. From the rear of the house you overlooked the table-land, swamp, and woods. The House itself was old-fashioned, two storied, ornamented with a rustic verandah. The front-door was porched. A haw-haw lifted the lawn and flower-beds above the road.

The farmyard and buildings—barns, piggeries, stables, &c.—were another hundred yards up the road; the ricks lay behind them.

From this description, it will be seen that Brook Farm did not materially differ from an English farm. It wanted that finish which you see in a Hertfordshire or Sussex farm,—for one thing, it had stone walls instead of green hedges. But, if it was their inferior here, it excelled them in picturesqueness—at any rate, it was not the newly-cleared, bear-haunted, forlorn-looking place which American farms are generally supposed to be. Yet it was a fair specimen of thousands of farms in that and the adjoining counties. I know we all quickly fell in love with it, and shall continue to think of it tenderly to our dying day.

When we first took possession, we were a large and merry party, scarcely a year out from England. We had our society amongst ourselves. We could turn our hands to most things; what one could not do, or did not take to, another was pretty certain to like. Then we had a passion for three things which seem essential to a happy country home—nature, music, fun. In the summer, we set about insect collections of all kinds. In the winter, we had a Question-Society, and edited

a family newspaper. Of an evening, we had singing or games.

Perhaps you will say, "Not much work done on that farm." I beg to submit that we did work most energetically. Not an acre of Brook Farm but was well watered with the sweat of our brows. In three years' time, we brought it up from a "desolation," as it was when we took it, to a model for the neighbourhood, and that chiefly by our own labour. We were none of your clodhoppers!—Why must farmers be such? We had gentlemanly tastes, and a dash of romance—why should not farmers have these? But they did not make us less able and willing to handle the flail and the ox-whip. Above all, I hope we had the fear of God in our hearts—His blessing was daily sought. We tried to do whatever we did as unto Him; and that is the strongest possible incentive to industry, whilst it is a never-failing spring of gladness amidst its toils.

OLD GRANDPAP.

OUR nearest neighbours were half a mile or more distant. There,—in a secluded valley, through which ran the river Aquehung, plentifully shaded by trees, and with gardens in front of them, lay four or five cottages. The centre of this group was a flour-mill, worked by the river. Of course, it was snowy white, as a flour-mill should be. Listen when you would, you could hear its ponderous wheel in busy revolution; or, if it paused awhile, you had in its stead the roar and thunder of the waste water, as it fell over the dam a foaming cataract. Of this fall you got a capital view from a wooden bridge, which crossed the river about thirty yards below it. On that bridge I often loitered of a summer evening, after flinging my sack of corn on the mill floor, to watch the miniature rainbow formed in the mist, or mark the haunt of a three-pound trout, to be snared (in a wire noose) at one's leisure;—so clear was the stream, that I could count the red spots on his back. The pond

behind the mill was a considerable sheet of water—splendid for skating; it had little reedy islands in it, the independencies of musk-rats and bitterns; wild woods surrounded it, and yellow lilies fringed its shores.

To this mill came all the country round with its grain. It was a public benefactor. What a deal of grinding, what a deal of indigestion it saved!—We carried our wheat and maize to it hard as a flint, and it returned it to us dainty and delicate,—fit to set before a king. The mill had a benevolent, motherly look about it, as if it delighted in these kindly offices. A right handsome fellow was Bluff, the miller,—a specimen of a man, with a hearty shake of the hand and a fresh smile for everybody. His wife, too, and his brood of black-eyed children, are memorable things to me. They lived apart from the mill; but it managed to powder them with its puff, and give them the true miller's complexion.

It so happened that Bluff was the nephew of the person of whom we had purchased Brook Farm. We had bought it in a ruinous condition, for I am sorry to say that

Uncle Isaac was too fond of his cider barrel, —would go down into the cellar and make his tongue do plug duty,—in fact, empty the cask into himself. Sooner or later this sort of sowing is sure to yield a prickly crop; so Uncle Isaac had to sell out and go west. And when we took possession, the buildings cried aloud for the carpenter, and the fields for the plough. As to his stock, their hides looked like cocoa-nut door-mats, and their ribs could be counted afar off.

Now the father of Isaac, the grandfather of the handsome miller, the great-grandfather of the black-eyed children, was still alive. Isaac himself was grey-headed. You may fancy, therefore, the years which old Grandpap had seen. He was ninety when we first knew him, and he survived to turn the corner of his century. In his youth he had had Brook Farm himself; and in the revolutionary war he had suffered rough treatment at the hands of the British soldiers, or the Tories, whose hands were even less gentle. They had seized him, tied his thumbs together, and hung him up by them, to screw out of him the

place where he had hid his money. He held out doggedly, either because he had no money hid, or because he preferred torture to a surrender of his earnings to a set of brigands. But there was no mistake about it,—he bore the scars of the cords on his thumbs to the last, and could (till his memory failed) point out the tree on which he had swung. Now, alas! his mind was a wreck. He stared at you vacantly, and his whining, infantine voice surprised you, issuing as it did from the midst of a snowy, patriarchal beard. His daily walk was from his house by the mill, to our farm-yard gate. At that he would linger, leaning on its topmost bar for hours, gazing at us as we bustled about, and everlastingly putting to us his one question,—“Where’s Isaac gone?” We would offer him food or drink, press him to take a seat under the verandah, or beg him to let us bring him a chair; but it was useless. He did not even thank us. “You are all strangers to me,” was the only reply,—“Where’s Isaac gone?” No matter who passed by, old or young, they could not escape that plaintive in-

quiry,—“Where’s Isaac gone?” It affected us more than I can tell you. I have frequently taken to my heels, or made a wide circuit to avoid it. Poor old Grandpap! Well might you ask where that wretched son of yours was, and sigh to see strangers usurping his authority. Did we remind you of the British soldiers, or Tories, and recal to you the agonies of those fearful moments on the hill yonder?

We treated him respectfully, and told him Isaac’s story fifty times a-day. After awhile he got accustomed to us, and would, apparently, be pleased to see us as we shook his cold fingers and wished him good morning, or led him aside that we might open the gate. But, as long as I can remember him, he continued that pertinacious research as to Isaac’s whereabouts.

He commonly went by the name of Old Grandpap. He was known throughout the country as a relic of a giant generation,—a mossy wayside stone, written over with undecipherable hieroglyphics. When at length we missed him from the gate, and the news ran

that he was dead, many tears fell; and for months there was a blank in our farm scenery. Yet, for his own sake, we could not regret that he had done with a world in which he had become a nonentity, and awakened, as we trusted, to fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

THE ORCHARD.

No words can describe the beauty of an American apple-orchard. We had two which adjoined, separated by a zig-zag fence; but the bars were always down, and to all intents and purposes they were one. Each had its share of hill and valley,—each its home and distant landscape; the nearest overlooked the farmhouse and buildings, the farthest, the river meadows. The trees—some old and gnarled; some young and dandified—stood in rows as straight as a street. About the middle of May they were in full blossom; and we com-

pared them to a large bridal party promenading whilst the bells rang merry peals; or a crowd of white-dressed girls dancing on the village green. Then every sniff of air was heavy with honied odours; and if you listened you would hear the murmuring of innumerable bees, rising and swelling like the strains of an *Æolian* harp. There were the humblers,—thousands of them, droning away as they tasted bloom after bloom; and there were their busier kinsmen, by myriads, loading their yellow thighs for the common good. Occasionally lovely little humming-birds, with their white bosoms and emerald necks, might be seen; now darting hither and thither quick as lightning; now hovering, spirit-like, whilst they thrust their long tongues into the flower cup; now resting an instant on a twig, and uttering a sharp, whisking kind of squeak. I used to knock them down with a tall switch (they are easily frightened to death, and a very slight blow kills them), and carry them in as gifts to my sisters. The blue robins also warbled softly amongst the branches from morning to night, and built their nests deftly in a crotch,

as the English chaffinch does. Nor must I omit the fire birds—those splendid southerners, crimson as a pulpit cushion—the tame cat-birds mewing plaintively, and peeping at you to see if you were after their blue eggs—the Baltimore orioles, black-winged and orange-vested, chattering to their mates, as they wrought together at their curious hanging nurseries, safe from the inspection of skunks and weasels—and the cheerful, ever-chirping titmice showing their crested heads at all kinds of unexpected holes. Once—passing one of these holes, I was arrested by a strange hissing sound issuing therefrom. I was about to thrust my hand in, when I hesitated. “Perhaps it is a batch of black snakes. Perhaps it is a grey squirrel, and *haven’t* they got teeth!” However, nothing venture, nothing have; so down went my arm almost to the shoulder. I got hold of something fleshy and hot, and drew it up.—What in the world is coming? It was a young owl, well fledged, with gaping beak, and eyes like two full moons (no wonder under the circumstances!). I brought out three others, and wrapped them

in my handkerchief. Their cries woke their sleeping parents, and they flew to the rescue. But the sunlight prevented them from making a very vigorous attack.—It consisted chiefly in staring, hooting, and rustling their feathers. I meant their offspring no harm. We placed them in a rabbit-hutch, and then set it not far from their native hole that papa and mamma might still minister to their comfort. However, in the night, with papa's and mamma's help, they managed to squeeze themselves through the bars (though it seemed impossible), and hopping off, under their guidance, quitted Brook-Farm orchard till they were full grown, when they returned in force to revenge themselves by disturbing our nights.

As the fruit ripens, the pigs are turned in to eat up the windfalls. The geese and turkeys, too, are fond of a peck at them, and spend their time in strolling from tree to tree. When an apple drops, ears are pricked, and they race off, pigs, geese, and turkeys, pell-mell towards the spot. The first in has the prize—that is, if he can keep it. If strong

enough to do so, the others hustle him closely, and pick up the fragments. A cunning hog, with a keen scent, will sit on his haunches listening, and get a dozen yards' start of the others;—whilst they are forming a conclusion, he is half way to the apple!

It is customary to allow passers-by to pluck enough to refresh themselves, but not to carry any away—that would be thought grasping and thievish. If you are there, they ask you for them; if not, they help themselves; and you restrain your feelings, because you know that some day, when you are passing a neighbour's orchard, *you* may be thirsty.

Who has not tasted the famous New-Town pippins, and admired the rosy-cheeked Lady apples?—Both of these are the growth of American orchards. The crop is more regularly plentiful than in this country. The trees make a magnificent appearance just before gathering. The bright hues—red, golden, and streaked—set off by the green leaves, are something remarkable. How the hungry swine gaze at them, and lick their lips! How the

crows stop in their high flights, and caw over them !

Then,—well this side of the frost, all hands are piped for the picking. The choice varieties are to be fingered as gently as if they were glass balls. I turn sailor,—lay out on the slimmest limbs, fill my pockets to bursting, then descend and lay the spoil in nice new barrels. Others are mounted on ladders with baskets ; others on steps with aprons.

The commoner sorts are shaken down as violently as you please, and on everybody's head (O for an umbrella !). As fast as we can collect them, we toss them into an ox-cart, and thence into the cider-mill. There we squeeze them with a press, and the delicious juice runs out into pails—a sparkling rivulet, which we ply with straws, *à la* sherry cobbler—of course, only to be able to pronounce on its quality. What *does* get into the pails is draughted off, and laid up to be drunk for the twelvemonth, instead of beer—a beverage quite unknown on American farms.

Soon after this grand disbursement, the orchards shed their foliage, and fight through the stormy winter under “bare poles,” silently recruiting for next year’s outlay of ungrudged charity to bees, birds, beasts, and men.

“WOLF! WOLF!”

BEING the David—the youngest of the brothers—the lighter farm work fell to my lot. I was milker of cows, feeder of chickens, collector of eggs, waterer of horses, and, like David, feeder of sheep. This last, though it sounds so sweet and pastoral, was anything but a sinecure. You picture the author reclining under a cedar of Lebanon, trilling on a flute, with his crook lying by his side, and his flock around him—meek-eyed, fat, and fleecy—some cropping the green sward, some dozing in the sunshine, some rubbing themselves against his feet. He

is sorry to dispel such an Oriental illusion, but the facts of the case were very different.

For himself, he was bronzed by exposure to summer heats, dressed in off-hand style—straw hat and shirt sleeves,—and instead of playing a reed, whittled a hickory stick. His pasture was a barren hill-side field, at the furthest corner of our domain ; and his flock consisted of about twenty of the most untractable, unpoetical sheep imaginable. They were as long-legged and nimble as antelopes, and underneath those cast-iron skulls lay as much self-will and artfulness as an animal brain can pack away.

Take your eye off from them for a moment, and one or another would bolt for a stone wall or zigzag fence, clear it at a bound, and lead you such a chase as left you breathless. Occasionally they would do this collectively—not, however, keeping together, as respectable sheep always will, but scattering in a dozen opposite directions—each for himself, as though a bombshell had fallen in the middle of them, whilst you, the poor distracted shep-

herd, sat there wanting twenty pairs of legs to pursue and recover them.

So intolerable was the trouble they gave us, that we jumped at an advertisement in a country newspaper, calling the attention of afflicted farmers to a race of *stumpy* sheep, incapable of leaping, or even of running. We purchased a couple of these invaluable quadrupeds, and, sure enough, they *were* stumpy. They nearly killed us with laughter,—they looked for all the world as if they had been amputated at the knee-joint; their dewlaps nearly touched the ground. Add to this, a long body, crumpled horns, and sweeping tail, and you have the perfection of sheepish ugliness! Yet, with those stag-legged gentlemen in bitter remembrance, I took to these low and slow cousins of theirs wonderfully, and, for my part, would have banished the others from that day forward. Shall I ever forget the shouts one day, when, having sheared Master Billy (as we called the ram of this interesting pair), I left a circle of wool round his neck, and a tuft at the end of his tail, and

then exhibited him in the stable as a new variety of French poodle.

But to return. I was mounting guard over my wild flock in the aforesaid far-off field. It was an exceedingly lonely place—romantic, if you please, but not pleasant to a timid lad. I might have been murdered, and lain in my blood for hours, before it was found out. I might (I thought) be kidnapped by men-stealers, have my face sooted, and be sold for a slave into South Carolina. Many such horrors occurred to me, and made me tremulous.

I was perched on a rock on the side of the lot nearest home (you may be sure), and wishing the horn would blow for supper, when, casting my eye towards the opposite corner, I saw one — two — three shaggy, fiercely-whiskered creatures emerge from the wood, and come trotting steadily, in single file, directly towards me and my charge. Having entire confidence in my sheep's ability to take care of themselves if it was a question of flight, and seeing them prick up their ears, stare, and preparing

for a rush, I wasted no time in curious investigations as to the species of the approaching three, but slipped off the rock, and ran as fast as I ever ran in my life to the house. There I roused my brothers with the startling report that three mysterious beasts of prey (names unknown, but, I guessed, young bears, or at least wolves), had broken cover, and were charging down upon the sheep.

My brothers couldn't believe it, but they acted as if they did, for they seized pitchforks and guns, and hurried back with me to the far-off field. Our relief was great at finding the flock huddled together (for once) safe and sound—in a warlike attitude, however—and with their noses pointing towards the wood. This boded well for my credit, and my brothers allowed that there was something in the wind. We proceeded to the wood, and began to beat it regularly, with loud shouts and outcries. Our dogs, which had followed, were ordered behind, lest they should be torn in pieces; guns were kept cocked, signals arranged, and we advanced in line. We were drawing the

last thicket, when we heard the rustling of feet amongst the leaves and the crackling of dry twigs — then a suppressed growl — then a chorus of barking and yelling. Our dogs sprang in — there was a higgledy-piggledy combat, and then out trotted — yes, out trotted three indignant Scotch terriers, the property of the marble-quarry proprietor! My brothers had a capital joke against me. But I was not so very far wrong, for not many weeks after, those three Scotch terriers fell upon a neighbour's lambs, and worried half-a-dozen of them to death.—They were captured in the very act, and shot on the spot.

Thenceforward, however, I hope I was a more courageous shepherd, and I know I made a particular study of the points of difference between Scotch terriers and American carnivora.

PLEASANT SUNDAYS.

BROOK Farm was about three miles from the village of Lancaster. It was the nearest village to us, and thither we had to go for our letters, literature, clothes, and groceries; all of which, and blue pills besides, could be obtained in one large shop. The village, nicely shaded with locust-trees, straggled for another mile along the high-road,—the houses being mostly on the left-hand side of the way, as on the right-hand side, the land bordered on a vast salt-marsh, watered, and often flooded by a tidal creek, which connected Lancaster with the sea. Beyond the marsh, rose a somewhat hilly and well-wooded country, trending towards other townships. The inhabitants of Lancaster were mostly farmers, each living on his own small holding. Here and there was a villa of pretentious architecture, the residence of a retired city tradesman, or of an elderly maiden lady, invisible as a dormouse during the cold season. The Lancastrians must have been

a healthy population, for they had no doctor. They must have been a happy population, for they had no lawyer. That they were kindly and hospitable, we had many practical experiences. There were, as there always are, village curiosities among them; the chief of these was that aged patriarch Beldart, the sexton,—six feet of bone and muscle,—bell-ringer and grave-digger,—the parish authority,—the person (according to his own estimate) on whose Atlas shoulders rested all the interests of true religion and virtue in Lancaster.

Close on his heels came Squire Timms, a crotchety bachelor, — Rector's churchwarden, always in a fidget about something, — the target of the village belles. Then there was "*Aunt Bathsheba*," as she was called, — as her own children called her, — fattest and amiablest of women, — throwing off smiles as the sun throws off its rays, — delighting much in tea-parties (she was famous for crullers and dough-nuts), and so fond of hearing herself sing, that she never

knew when to let a note go, but would be warbling away at the first line of a psalm whilst the congregation had turned the corner of the third.—If it was not praying for the dead, I would say, “Bless her dear old soul.” Sixty years ago, when a boy, whilst playing about the camp of a British regiment then lying at Lancaster, her husband had had his skull cracked by a wanton soldier, who got, as he deserved, the cat-o’-nine-tails for it. He had to be trepanned, and there, on the crown of his polished head, encircled by a wreath of snowiest hair, you could see the piece of silver (we always set it down for an English half-crown) which the doctors had made him a present of.

The parish church,—St. Peter’s,—of which our beloved father was Rector, stood by itself on a green knoll at the entrance of the village. It was a large stone edifice, begun prior to the revolutionary war, and had been used as a court-house or hospital by either army, according as one or the other occupied Lancaster. Beldart remembered when you could trace

blood-stains on the floor. There,—even up to our day, sunken in the trunks of a row of venerable acacias, might be seen the rings to which troopers had fastened their horses, and occasionally (so tradition said) unhappy creatures with two legs less than a horse.

I have told you that the church stood by itself on a green knoll.—It was surrounded with tall willows and poplars,—but the glittering weathercock on its spire out-topped the tallest of them. The churchyard, which sloped down to the marsh, lay behind. It was spacious, yet thickly covered with stones, some just from the mason's chisel, some dating back as far as 1688. Over the graves ran quantities of blackberry vines, the fruit whereof we could stick on our thumbs like thimbles; but we dare not go very deeply into their constituents.—I am afraid that these juicy blackberries often drew us off from profiting by the epitaphs.

Adjoining the church was a hundred-and-fifty-feet carriage shed, built (as the inscription on it testified) by that munificent indi-

vidual, "John Armiger, Esq., for the comfort and convenience of the worshippers at St. Peter's."

It *was* a "comfort and convenience," for numbers of the worshippers came from a distance, and we could not leave our vehicles exposed to the noon-heat or rain. Now we drove into this famous shed, exchanged our horses' bridles for halters, gave them their hay or corn, and left the whole row—two or three dozen—in charge of a single man.

For this church, then, of a Sunday, our family started about ten o'clock, directly the necessary farm duties were done. It was a three-quarters of an hour's drive, for there were some formidable hills to ascend and descend. We made a regular cavalcade,—four-wheels, two-wheels, and saddle,—seldom less than fifteen souls,—and we carried our own and our horses' provender with us, for it was too far to return between morning and afternoon services.

Arrived, we had ten minutes to see the horses stabled, and exchange a word with the

farmers' sons, who lingered outside the porch till the bell tolled in. Then we took our seats in the gallery around the organ.—(The organ also announced, in gold letters, that it was the gift of the munificent “John Armiger, Esq.”) We were the choir, whilst our eldest sister played. The Prayer-book service is the same as in England, except that you pray for the “President of these United States,” instead of “our Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria,” and for “the Senate and Representatives in Congress assembled,” instead of “the High Court of Parliament.” Our beloved father had no curate.—I often wished I could have helped him when it was so hot that every opening of the mouth was an effort. He preached simply, affectionately, earnestly,—upholding the Banner of the Truth with both hands; and the people knew the joyful sound, and crowded to hear it.

After service we looked to the horses, and then, in exceedingly primitive style, spread our own meal on the vestry table, and, sitting round on chairs and hassocks, ate our meal

“with gladness and singleness of heart, giving thanks to God” for it in his own house. In extreme summer the vestry was too close, and we had to adjourn to the open space around the communion rails.

Then our Sunday-school commenced. We had fifty or sixty children. They were arranged in classes in the gallery. My personal charge was a group of black boys. They were merry fellows,—merrier than wise.—They laughed at the driest question in the Catechism, and there were certain Scripture stories, as Balaam and his loquacious ass, and Jonah in the whale’s belly, which gave rise to such a rolling of the whites of their eyes, and to such rollicking sounds, that I did not venture to narrate them twice. I tried to write lessons on their memories, but it was very much like trying to write them on a whipt syllabub.

Sunday-school ended, we strolled up a lovely shady valley, down which a brook dropped musically; lay on the cool sward; listened to the wood-thrush’s vespers; and talked on sacred subjects.

By-and-by the bells rang again, and we assembled for a late afternoon service. Then hastening home, we walked over the farm, and marked the growth of things; and so, thanking God for our Sabbaths, finished them, as a Christian household should, with “hymns and spiritual songs.”

Those were pleasant Sundays. I regale myself on them now! They were pleasant, I verily believe, because they were observed *sacredly*. Busy six-day workers need a seventh day's rest, and you cannot rest if you allow worldly enterprises or worldly pleasures to occupy the mind,—they keep the mill grinding, whereas you want to shut it up, and get rid of its clatter.

It is possible for everybody to sanctify the Lord's-day in their hearts, and if they have learnt that secret, they have learnt the secret of *pleasant* Sundays.

MY PARTICULAR FRIENDS.

I MAY say at once that these were the birds—the wild birds of Brook Farm, whose songs enlivened all its acres, and whose habits I was never weary of studying. I carried out from England some knowledge of their British cousins, the fruit of boyish observation, so I enjoyed the pleasure and advantage of constant comparison between the two. The humming-birds—those tiniest of the feathered tribes—have been noticed in a former chapter. A newly-landed Irishman, who had heard of them from letters, is said to have mistaken a big humble-bee for one. Having caught it after great labour, he laid it in his hand, and was stroking it admiringly, wondering what his baby would say to it, when it stung him in the palm, like a darning-needle.—Dashing it to the ground, he cried, “Murder!—who’d have thought that its little toes were so hot?”

Their favourite resort was a row of scarlet-runners in the kitchen garden, or the trumpet-

honeysuckle on the verandah. There they would hover, squeaking and sipping, till sunset. Occasionally they would dart into the rooms, and you could catch them. We found but one of their nests, which shows that they do not generally incubate so far north. The nest we have is about the size of a billiard ball, and is made of wood-moss and wool. It contains three eggs, which look like round sugarplums.

But, if you choose, we will have a walk, and then we can call on my particular friends in their own parlours.

What is that warbling deliciously, as our English blackbird does of a spring evening? Look, and on that dry apple-branch you will see a bright blue bird, with a red breast; it is the blue-robin, and has much of the domesticity and solitariness of your old acquaintance over the water, only he does not stay out the winter. He is one of the earliest spring arrivals, and his note is—who shall say how welcome!—As I recall it now, I am instantly transported to Brook Farm!

On that breezy ash-top sit a flock of red-

winged blackbirds. In flying they keep up rather high, but they are fond of swooping down for a rest, when they sing in chorus, a kind of toora-loora-lee trill. The male is larger than the female, and has a splendid crimson epaulet on each shoulder.

That blazing ball which shot by us just then, is a scarlet tanner, or fire-bird, not common in our county, but seen every summer. A late sharp frost kills him outright, and the next morning he is picked up on the ground, as you pick up a rosy-cheeked apple.

Yonder chattering pair are Baltimore orioles,—the hen, dusky yellow; the cock, a bright orange, with black wings. They abound on farms, and build their ingenious hanging nests near the house, as if sociably inclined. There were always several on our great walnut-tree, swinging, as ladies' bags do, from the most delicate arms, so that you could only reach them at the imminent risk of breaking your neck. But I forgave them that, and loved to listen to their garrulous talk.

Did you notice that large bird lighting on the poplar?—It is a red-headed woodpecker.

He takes a survey before he goes to work; then he glides along the limb to the trunk; and now, hark how he hammers with his strong bill!—That grub, or whatever it is, at whose door he is knocking, may as well open and surrender at once. He has a small half-brother, with a ruby crest and speckled plumage, whose tap is nearly as loud, but he is more of a creeper, and prefers fences.

“Mew! mew!”—Why, here is a cat! No, it is a cat-bird. Those hazels overhanging the brook swarm with them. They are a tame, dun-coloured bird—very fussy over their blue eggs—exceedingly deprecating your approach to them. What amorous cats must think when they get amongst a party of them, and they mock, as they always do, their tenderest heart utterances, I cannot conceive!—It is strange that they do not league together to exterminate the whole species. They will pester you for miles, mewing! mewing! mewing! till you pelt them off.

Now to the swamp. There is a winsome little bird, the song-sparrow, with much of the linnet in his music, but of a beautiful variegated

chestnut colour. He delights in the neighbourhood of water, in which he immerses himself a dozen times a day, and then perches on a reed, to tell you, in Jenny-Lind style, how greatly he has enjoyed it.

There, too, is Bob Bobolink, Esq., with his yellow cap and black-and-drab body—sauceiest of birds. At the South, where he hibernates, he is known as the rice-bird. There he alters his costume, and exhibits himself in a brown smock,—I believe, too, he plays a new set of tunes. What stories *he* could tell you of Georgian plantations—negroes' sighs and negroes' melodies!—What appendices he could write to "Uncle Tom's Cabin!" Mrs. Stowe, did you ever bribe him to peep? I respect him, though he is so saucy, for he has companied with flamingoes and pelicans, roosted amongst parrots, and sipped rain-drops in sight of alligators. The rice makes an alderman of him, and he is a prize for a pie. At the North, as we said, he appears in another character, in court dress, vivacity itself, swinging the lifelong day on a bending bulrush, making such melody as

he can to his modest mate (who retains the brown smock), as she broods over their callow young.

Then as we pass up the road we start the wee indigo-bird, preening its lapis-lazuli feathers on a stone; and the canary-birds in half-dozens, picking at the thistles.—They will only take a short flight however, for they are used to these disturbances.

I should weary you with introductions to the less attractive birds;—the wood-thrush, a nice singer,—the meadow-lark, big and dumb as a field-fare,—the pink crossbill,—the quail, piping “Bob-white” in the clover,—the wild pigeons, streaming across the sky by their armies. I must, however, introduce you to the dear little snow-birds—a miniature edition of our common hedge-sparrow, except that the male is a slate-blue. They are “faithful found” when all other birds forsake you. Whilst “the friends who in our sunshine lived,” have ordered themselves off to luxuriate in the Bahamas or Cuba, they stick close to you from year’s end to year’s end. In the frost and snow they come hopping and chir-

ruping before your door; and you would not eat your breakfast comfortably if you did not cast them a handful of crumbs. I once knocked one of them over with a pebble, and I declare it rests on my conscience to this hour.

People often ask whether any of the American birds are good singers. As a whole, they are not equal to our island natives in that respect; and during the winter, and very hot months, you will not hear anything deserving the name of a song. But in the early spring there is plenty of warbling, trilling, and chattering—quite as much as we have in England: And the mocking-bird can always be balanced against the nightingale, as both are partial in their localities.—We had no mocking-birds in Chatemuc County; but then I know counties here where people go miles in flys to hear “sweet Philomel!”

Swallows skimmed over Brook Farm as they skim over the Thames,—as they skim up and down the streets of Pekin and Rio Janeiro.—They cover the world! It gave us a home feeling directly, to find these familiar twitterers

gyrating in the air, and plastering mud under the eaves. They looked so very British that we expected to see Fire-birds, Baltimore orioles, Bob Bobolink, Esq., and other genuine Americans, chasing them as trespassing foreigners!

Perhaps, however, *they* were as pleased to have them there as we were—viewing them as the representatives of the birds of every land—feathered ambassadors from the peacocks of the Himalayas, the nightingales of Persia, the larks of England, the macaws of the Brazils. God has sought in many ways to show us that the Continents, though divided by seas, are parts of one and the same Planet; and the cosmopolitan swallows are another testimony to that effect.—“The Earth and the fulness thereof” is their home—they will have no boundary lines. It would be more creditable to mankind if *we* had fewer.

TUB NAVIGATION.

THE River Aquehung formed our western border line. It was hardly to be called a river, for it was not more than thirty feet wide. But it was a delectable stream, almost hidden by the trees which grew on its banks and intertwined their branches overhead. It made a great brawling in places where it was interrupted by snags and stones ; but where it had a clear course, it went its winding way noiselessly and swiftly, with numberless eddies and whirls. At such parts of it a brace of wild mallards loved to lurk, spluttering along the banks, whilst far above them in the foliage, the squirrels frisked and chattered, and dropped acorns on their backs, to their infinite disquietude. There in hot days we bathed, plunging in head first from the shore or an old stump ; and so refreshing was it that we never knew when to come out. There, too, we resorted to fish ; and it was a treat to be remembered, to sit by the hour over a dark pool, pulling up now a trout, and now an eel, or sniffing the yellow violets or

anemones which peeped at you from amongst the grass.

When the Aquehung was swollen by a sudden thaw, as was generally the case at the breaking up of the frost in February, it flooded the River meadows, and they, in their turn, flooded the Swamp,—some forty acres of boggy ground, stretching half the length of the farm.—It was generally in a soft and miry state, kept so by the brook which flowed through the middle of it; but now it became a regular lake—the water several feet deep all over it, with here and there the top of a knoll for an island.

Such was the state of things one bright spring day, when, having nothing better to do, boy-like, I proposed to myself a sail. It was not very dignified for a lad who had been tossed in a ship of 2,000 tons on the Atlantic; but I got a large washing-tub from the laundry, —the maids surrendered it under terror of having their ears pulled,—rolled it down to the edge of the water, launched it, leaped into it with a pole for a paddle, and was soon punting off for the middle of our Mediterranean.

Never was a First Lord of the Admiralty prouder of his vessel than I of mine. It is true, that it was not clipper-built, and that it had neither hold nor cabin; but it was "copper-fastened," dry, and commodious; and when I hoisted my yellow pocket-handkerchief for an ensign, and answered my brothers' and sisters' huzzas with a responsive cheer, I felt the true Captain-Cook-circumnavigator enthusiasm, and even thought lightly of Sir John Franklin's sally at the North Pole.

But I had taken no account of the brook current, into which I was now drawn. It speedily had the mastery of my jolly-boat, and I went whirling round and round after a manner anything but creditable to my seamanship. But I could not help it. There I was, a feather,—the sport of the tide! I was being borne rapidly towards the road, which the brook usually ran under, but now rushed *over*,—only a post or two marking its whereabouts. Once on the other side of the bridge, and I was lost; for then the valley narrowed, and the water deepened and hurried propor-

tionally, until it debouched into the river itself; and if it shot me into that, I had seen my brothers and sisters for the last time.

Everything depended, therefore, upon my jumping from my rudderless craft *as she crossed the road*. My brothers and sisters saw my peril, and cried out to me to push out of the current; but that was impossible: then they wanted me to leave the tub instantly, and take my chance of wading ashore; but I said to myself, "Who knows but I may alight in the brook, and find the bottom with a yard of water above my head!—No, no, I'll stick to my tub till she crosses the road." I endeavoured to guide her as well as I could with my pole, so that she should take the road at its highest point; but as she approached the critical spot I own I quaked. Presently we dashed between two of the posts—another second, and I judged we were fairly upon the road—a quarter of *another* second, and it will be too late. "NOW!"—I sprang overboard, was blinded with the splash, stumbled, and fell on my face. Screams of horror rang in my ears! "I'm drowned!" I thought. But no. I floundered up, and rose

by my shoulders higher than the seething waters. "Hold fast, and pick your way."—It was no easy work that—it was like struggling with a steam-engine. But a kind Providence strengthened and directed me, and step by step I neared the dry land. When at last I set foot on it,—dripping and crestfallen though I was, and my brothers and sisters welcomed me as one alive from the dead, I can tell you I was thankful! What became of the tub this history cannot depone; but probably it did not stop short of the coast of Portugal. I never attempted tub navigation again, and I should advise all little boys who are ambitious of it, previously to make sure that their inland lake has no connexion with the Bay of Biscay.

THE VORACIOUS SOW.

WE were strong in pigs. One, from her English pedigree and fair complexion, we rather disrespectfully called "Queen Victoria;" but

then we treated her right royally: she had a state pigstye all to herself, and we had brought her home from a sale in the Jerseys in a spring waggon, pillowing her nose on a stuffed cushion, only bargaining, in return for these attentions, that she should not squeal as we were driving through the towns.

Next to Her Majesty in favour, stood the youthful "Black Prince,"—also illustriously connected. He measured five feet three inches from the tip of his snout to his tail, and was still growing. The colour of jet, he carried a tusk as irresistible as his great namesake's lance on the field of Cressy. The single hog who dared accept his challenge and stand before him, was a huge down-east boar, bristled like a porcupine, and hardly escaped from the wild-beast condition.—Set him down in the Forest of Vincennes, and they would have telegraphed him to the Emperor as the pink of wild-boar chivalry. He was the progenitor of a swarm of long-sided, lean-hammed porkers, known out West as "half wolf, half alligator," with lungs on the barrel-organ principle, *i.e.*, capable of playing pig music—

a variety of squeaks and grumbles—from the rising to the going down of the sun.

But of all feminine swinish notables, the chief was “Big Bess.” She was a strong-minded as well as a strong-winded sow, standing a calf’s height, and born to rule amongst her sex. “Queen Victoria” was the object of her especial hatred; could she have got at her, she would have made a republican mouthful of those silken ears of hers, and shown her what *she* thought of pig uppishness. As it was, she was often to be seen trotting, in her restless, independent way, to the Queen’s sty, and grinning defiance at her through the palings.

In her time, Big Bessie had given birth to no less than a hundred and twenty little pigs. This of itself surrounded her with matronly dignity, and she appeared quite conscious of it. She would go wherever she pleased—far away up the road, or into the wood, or down to the river; nothing but a wall would stop her. Frequently she took it into her head to inspect the kitchen-garden and taste a melon; and the

cook has complained that she found her lying in wait at the scullery door for a pot of cauliflowers.

In her sixth year, Big Bessie began an evil course. We had left the cider running into a tub; she broke into the mill-house, drank her fill, and was discovered drunk on the floor! We had to bleed her and rub her violently, and she rallied; but it would have humbled your human tippler to see her staggering about, trying to keep her legs. I forget whether we allowed the younger hogs to behold her and be warned; if so, it must have been an edifying spectacle to them. I said it was the beginning of an evil course. Not long after this, a lamb was missing—an innocent lamb—the first of the season. It had been born the night previous, and we had all been up to the yard to look at it.—Now it was missing. We laid it to Reynard, or a bald-headed eagle.—Nobody suspected Big Bessie of such a foul deed.

Next week another vanished—a sturdy little fellow, that would have bothered a fox or a

bird. We were puzzled. That same afternoon, however, we heard a vociferous "ba-a-a-ing" in the sheep pen, and, on running thither, we beheld Mrs. Sow (I shall drop her Christian name here) in the act of devouring it alive! We cudgelled her soundly; but she had got her taste of blood, and from that date she plunged headlong. Yes,—I am sorry to have to relate it,—she proceeded from the assassination of lambs, to the murder and eating of her own offspring! Unnatural cannibal! my pen almost refuses to write more about thee; but thou shalt be held up as another example of the connexion between the first step from the path of virtue, and Destruction.

She had as fine a litter of little pigs as you ever counted—twelve of them. It was a sight to watch them fighting for their places at nursing-time; each one loving himself better than all the others, and all keeping each other so perpetually on the jump, that it was a marvel how any of them got a supper.

Alas! she was fattening them for her own regalement; at least, under cover of darkness,

three went that way before we could be sufficiently certain of the fact to remove the rest from her Blue Beard protectorate. Now her fate was sealed. She was ordered into the orchard to pick up her living on fallen apples, till such time as we should shut her up, with others, for fattening. We resolved to execute her capitally for her many crimes.—She was to be stuck till she was “dead, dead, dead;” then drawn and quartered; and then—cut up into bacon!—But please observe that we vowed that we would not use it ourselves.

But our vow was never tested: she saved us judicial proceedings by committing suicide. One night a high wind covered the ground with apples. She exercised no self-restraint,—fairly stuffed herself; fermentation coming on, she wandered down to the brook, and went in, we suppose, to drink. In the morning she was reported to be floating in the water,—stiff, and ready for the coroner.

We dug a hole near where she lay, and buried her dog-fashion. So Big Bessie’s bacon never had the honour of helping to constitute

any of the lords and ladies of creation, and the tiny ghosts of bleating lambs and squeaking sucking-pigs are said to haunt her grave to this day!

HAYING.

HAYMAKING is pretty much the same thing in all countries. Associated as it was with what we called "full blossom" days, cloudless skies, and united workers, we looked forward to it with pleasure. And then an American sun saves you no end of trouble and anxiety in the curing of hay, as, if you choose, you can carry it the same evening. We had half our farm in grass, for during the winter months, there is no pasture to be had. If you have not plenty of hay, your stock will have to chew rails. Besides, our vicinity to a great city made hay about the most remunerative crop we could grow. The swamp grass does very well

for the steers and heifers, but for our horses and milch cows we laid down clover and Timothy,—the latter a tall, spiry grass, with an ear to it somewhat resembling the green-wheat ear.

As there was so much to be cut, we were accustomed to swear in a special mower, in the person of one Fairfax, a black, who lived with his good wife in a little cabin on the hill-side. He was a godly man, and a local Methodist preacher—bold to reprove sin and speak a word in season for his Master. In early life he had been a slave, but for fifty years past he had had his freedom, and got his bread by day labour and cultivating a patch of ground around his hut. The children had grown up and married off, but they used to come and see them on Sundays, and bring “Daddy” and “Mammy” something nice for their dinner. Through their help, too, he had bought his three or four acres of timber, so that he held up his head in society as a landed proprietor.

It was marvellous to see that negro fell a

tree.—He would bury his razor-edged axe in it at each stroke, and knock it down for you in any direction you selected without touching it with one of his fingers.

It was marvellous, also, to see him go through a hayfield. Show him his job, and he was at it by daybreak,—a quarter through it by breakfast-time,—and out of it by sunset. Even a ten-acre lot did not frighten him. He would whet his scythe with a song, and then go sweeping down its centre nearly as fast as he could walk.—He knew that ere long not a single blade of those countless millions but would have felt and confessed the puissance of his strong right arm.

The grass laid in swards, we all turned out. (Our sisters were invited to join us in the cool of the day—"light forks specially provided.") Ha! was not it hot tho'! Did not the locusts by the dozen buzz lazily on the stone walls! Did not the gay butterflies go sailing along, flap, flap, as if it was too much trouble to ply their wings! Did not the swallows alight panting on the fence rails, saying to them-

selves, "Better go dinnerless, sitting still, than be grilled flying."—Bluebottle flies and humble bees seemed the only things capable of any degree of excitement under it. Yet we had to turn and toss the hay, and pitch it into the waggon when made, and, worse still, to stow it away in stifling mows in the barn. This latter was my share of the disagreeable, and you may depend upon it that it was the lion's share.—It was the penalty of my juvenility. Not that the tug on the muscles was heaviest, but the heat under the shingle roof was intolerable. It is a wonder that my hair did not frizzle like an African's, and as that of a young friend of mine did on board a United States' cruiser off the Bight of Benin. Any one who has survived stowing away hay in an American barn-mow for eight hours a-day for a fortnight, may be reckoned to have a touch of the salamander about him. The ox-teams ran the loaded waggons on to the threshing-floor; thence my brothers pitched the hay up to me, and I sowed it with salt to keep it sweet, and made a neat pack of it. I used to come down from

my purgatory red as a lobster, plastered with hay-seed, and with a lot of live grasshoppers bobbing about in my pocket.

The Arcadian phase of our haymaking was the clearing of the river meadows—those shady river meadows, with the water to drink of or plunge in at pleasure; but its mere plashings cooled us. The hay *there* was always got up too quickly—we did our best to delay it.—It got extra shaking before taking; and we voted the unpoetical horse-rake a nuisance.

Here, too, refreshing beverages passed freely; ginger pop; switchel,—a genuine Yankee compound of vinegar and molasses—and (tell it not to chemists and druggists) improvised seidlitz draughts,—the powders in bottles, mixed by guess in a brace of stone jugs. Schweppe and Co., benefactors of this teetotal generation, were then below the Brook Farm horizon.

When the last load was up, we youngsters were seated atop, and, with waving branches and vigorous huzzas, made a sort of triumphal

procession of it through the orchards, past the house, to the yard. An evening or two after, the stock was turned in—a heterogeneous company. Their outburst of glee amused us. The colts chased the calves, and the mares the bullocks, whilst the family ass cut a variety of capers on his own account.

Call this the play of farming, if you will, but the same vein of sprightliness ran through the whole cycle of labour, and lightened it. The dull, grubbing way in which most farming is carried on is a bad sign—it shows a selfish master and stupid servants. We should always seek to soften the Adamic curse as far as possible with an intermingling of the spices of life.—If the cost of them slightly reduces the banker's balance, it solaces the jaded heart.

THAT RENOWNED HORSE.

THE love of horseflesh—I speak figuratively—is an instinct in man. Who that could, would not have a horse? Who that has a horse does not get attached to him, and think him the best horse in the world? We Brook-Farmers did not pretend to be superior to these weaknesses; on the contrary, we indulged them till our stables showed quite a stud; our own legs for all migratory purposes became useless; we went everywhere,—even shortest distances, as quadrupeds. “Just take this note to Mrs. —,” or, “Just call one of your brothers.” “Certainly.”—In an instant I was mounted, bare back, and, giving my nag a twist of the halter for a bit, was off like the wind. This, however, was only work-a-day style. On Sundays, and all state occasions, we came out with dapper saddles and bridles; when we wanted to create a sensation, we added martingales and spurs. My Sunday palfrey was a fast little pony,—a present from a cousin. He could outtrot anything of

his size in the country. He had a zebra's spirit in that small frame of his, and carried such a neck and tail as would have secured him a bravo at Tattersall's.

"Bushy" was a black mare, bred in Ohio,—rather a lumberer,—best in the waggon. She astonished us one morning with a likely foal by her side. If he had dropped from the car of a balloon he could not have been more of a surprise. But Bushy owned him, so we could only do the same.

"Phillis," Bushy's mate, was under ten hands, neat framed,—round as a barrel,—of a reddish brown colour, with white nose and fetlocks. She had a good canter in her, and often got a half-holiday from the plough to help a brother in his courting.

"Pete" was a bright bay. Having been raised on the farm, he was an historical association, and our beloved father kept him for his parish jauntings till he almost asked for a bullet. He was not a nice-looking horse, but he had such an easy gait, and such an inexhaustible stock of "go" in him, that we shut our eyes to that, and considered him our *chef*.

—If we had ever had to turn out as militia cavalry, there would have been a scramble for him. I say all this about him disinterestedly, for if I am alive now it is not because Pete did not try to put an end to me. On a piercing January afternoon I went into his stall to bring him out for a gallop. My face was covered with a red worsted helmet. He took me for a thief, or worse, and began to rear and plunge. The first blow knocked me down, and he continued to pummel me till our united cries and snortings brought my brothers to the rescue. I was sadly cut and bruised about the thighs, and fainted dead away on the barn floor; but, through God's mercy, I was not seriously injured. It was my only horse accident, and that is saying something when I recollect that I have ridden thousands of miles.

“Colonel” and “Captain” had nothing worthy of note about them,—they were respectable farm drudges.

“Mary Dunn” was a cream-coloured porpoise, with black mane and tail. Her capacities for stowing away hay were enormous. She ate

her own head off twice a-year. I am afraid that we hated her; and I am afraid that the ladies of our family took her up *because* we hated her.—It might be more charitable, however, to attribute their affection to the fact that they could drive her themselves, and that she could pull a dozen of them at a time in a britschka. Economic principles frequently led us to form dark conspiracies against Mary Dunn's happiness; but so triumphant are the ladies when they espouse a cause, that we never got rid of her; and I have secret information that tufts of her black tail are treasured up in lockets to this day.

The "renowned" horse—we have reached him at last—was a venerable charger, named Admiral. I cannot say that he was comely either in his *personnel* or his goings, for he had a cropped mane and a poking head; and when he was in action (I don't mean in the field of battle) he shuffled like a camel. It was very wrong of us ever to try to extract more than four miles an hour out of him.—His years—he had no teeth left to tell how old he was—ought to have protected him. But young

men are thoughtless, and so, on a certain Easter Sunday, the brother who never boasted of his horsemanship, and whose theory was that the horse should take care of you and not you of the horse, was mounted on Admiral, and navigated him, or, rather, was navigated by him, to church. There were two others of us convoying him on horseback. On our way home, outstripping the carriages, we had reached a gentle incline, which led up to a long and precipitous hill,—the steepest of the journey. Up this incline we spurred briskly. As the pony and the colt were fresh, we speedily left our brother and his puffing ship-of-the-line in the rear. It was not half a mile from Brook Farm; so we rattled down the hill on the other side, and then, breaking into a hand-gallop, made for our stables. We had put up our horses, but no Admiral in sight. We went into the house and got ready for dinner,—still no Admiral. We felt uneasy, and said that we would walk up the road. Scarcely had we started when we descried the estimable commander of Admiral approaching us, with the saddle on his own shoulders and

the bridle dangling from his loins. "What has happened?—Has he sold Admiral on a Sunday?—Has he in a fit of benevolence turned him out to grass in a neighbour's clover?" He told us his story in a few words. That unfortunate breeze of ours had done for Admiral!—The sight of our careering steeds had struck sparks of fire in his aged head, and he had come down the hill flying. Our brother tugged in vain. Admiral was possessed. Our brother believed that if there had been a chasm as wide as the Hellespont at the bottom, he would have leapt it. For himself, he expected his fate. Presently Admiral stumbled and took a somerset; our brother went over his ears twenty feet in advance, and he felt thankful that, with such an impetus, he had not gone head-foremost into the earth like a thirty-two pound shot, and stuck there. He was shaken, but had no bones broken.

"But where's Admiral?" "Oh, he is all but dead!—I left him groaning by the roadside.—Did you expect me to carry him as well as the saddle and bridle?"

We returned with him to the spot. But,

meanwhile, the carriage folk had reached it, and were horror-stricken at beholding the gallant Admiral stretched full length on the grass, saddleless, riderless, and blood oozing from his mouth. They were almost afraid to look, for they felt certain that they should see our brother sitting mangled on the saddle, the other side of the stone wall; we arrived most opportunely to relieve their minds, and hasten them on to the Farm to send us the oxen and sled as quickly as possible. Admiral was indeed *hors de combat*.—We knew it, but decency required that he should be removed, and die, if he was to die, on our own land. We rolled him on to the sled, and dragged him to the quiet field at the back of the barn. It was Sunday work, but such Sunday work as our Lord himself expressly sanctioned:—“Which of you having an ox or an ass fallen into a pit on the Sabbath-day will not pull him out?”

In that field Admiral lay lingering for several days. He had a clean straw bed, and a blanket beside, quantities of warm mash and orthodox physic; but nothing availed. He

had passed his last milestone, and he closed his eyes for ever, to the unaffected sorrow of our brother, who gave expression to his grief in an elegant sonnet on him in the family newspaper.

“SQUATTER SOVEREIGNTY.”

A RAILWAY had been projected through the Farm. The surveyors had been through and staked out the ground; notice had been given that the land would be required, and in parts they had begun to dig, but it was only with a handful of men; and though, below our farm, they had expended a good deal of money in bridging the Aquehung, they suddenly gave it up, and several years passed before they recommenced operations. I suppose the Company broke down; certainly, there was a dead-lock somewhere, and we made no secret of our rejoicing. But the deceased Company left us a legacy. It was a curious one, and

brought with it, as most legacies do, mingled grief and enrichment. It was nothing less than a wooden shanty, with a live Irishman and his family for tenants.

The Company had built it substantially, with a view to the accommodation of their navvies. It was to be a sort of Paddy Hotel: board, lodging, washing (not much of it), and a smell of onions (plenty of it) to be had at so much a head. Mr. O’Flanagan, the proprietor, hung out no sign, and blew no trumpet in his own behalf; but there is that sort of freemasonry amongst Irishmen, particularly Irish navvies, which renders anything like puffing unnecessary. The navvies knew that there, at the O’Flanagan Arms, they would be treated handsomely; they knew, too, that O’Flanagan kept the “real old cordial,”—such plenty of it, that it was rumoured that he had hit on a spring, and that it would take a caravan of dromedaries and a hippopotamus to drink it dry.

I have said that the shanty was substantially built. It consisted of an upper and lower story, divided into half-a-dozen rooms. The

windows were glazed, and neatly curtained; the chimneys were always on the smoke—what could that busy Mrs. O'Flanagan be cooking from morning to night? Near the front door, of course, was the pigsty. Your true Irishman considers it as ornamental and fragrant as a flower-garden.—And then, what visions of bacon and greens it suggests! what are your geraniums and fuchsias compared with a solid prospect like that?

O'Flanagan himself was a short, square block of humanity, with red, curly hair, and a broad Tipperary brogue. His wife—I beg her pardon, *Mrs.* O'Flanagan,—was his ditto as far as a woman could be. The three small O'Flanagans,—one of whom claimed Brook Farm as native soil, were fat and freckled. Master O'Flanagan was in a corduroy suit, the breeches buttoning over his jacket, and displaying in sundry places proof positive of mamma's dexterity in patchwork. All three thrived finely; and no wonder: the shanty was in the midst of our corn-fields, and green corn has a very happy effect on little

boys and girls. Moreover, the pig increased in a most preternatural manner, considering that Mr. O’Flanagan never was known to buy meal for him. It was even hinted that, when our cows had been pasturing in the vicinity of the shanty, at milking-time one or another gave pints for quarts.

I need not say, then, that the O’Flanagans found this squatter sovereignty in the centre of a cultivated farm an exceedingly comfortable arrangement. Was it not a land of vineyards—a land flowing with milk and honey, for them? But for ourselves, whilst it could not but be gratifying to our bachelor feelings that we were contributing so largely to the easy housekeeping of Mrs. O’Flanagan and the rotundity of her offspring, we nevertheless voted the whole thing a nuisance, and determined to get rid of the O’Flanagans, their pig, and their shanty together.

How this was effected shall be told in another Chapter.

THE SHANTY FIGHT.

THE Squatter Sovereignty was exterminated, but only after a battle—a real battle, in which tears, hot coffee, cold water,—everything in fact, short of blood, was shed.

Having made up our minds, we intimated to Mr. O'Flanagan that he should go elsewhere. Mr. O'Flanagan was wounded.—“How could he think of deserting his post, and leaving the Company's interests to perish? No! he was a man of honour; and he would rather die than remove. Sorry, too, that he could not oblige us.” That night we missed a fat turkey; we connected the two things, and believed that Mr. O'Flanagan's insulted sense of justice had demanded a propitiation, and that he had spared us the trouble of presenting it.

Thereupon we took legal counsel, and to our extreme satisfaction, discovered that as the Company had not done anything on the line for a twelvemonth, nor paid a farthing for the land, we could claim the shanty as our property and do what we liked with it.—Now,

Mr. O'Flanagan, we can put a humble-bee into your ear! We gave him formal notice to quit in a fortnight. The fortnight elapsed, and he had not so much as begun to dream of going. Meanwhile, the pig grew quite apoplectic, and the youthful O'Flanagans added to their stature by inches.

We served a second notice—a week this time. It was disregarded. A third—the day after to-morrow; and the same with that. A fourth—to-morrow,—positively the very last.—“On that day, O'Flanagan, you must start, or the house shall come down on top of you!”—(Can't bachelors be fierce under provocation!)

The eventful morning arrived.—“Sebastopol is to be stormed!” We went down to the shanty, all four of us, with our teeth set, thinking to intimidate General Todtleben by a bold face. Not a bit of it. Mrs. O'Flanagan met us at the door with a still bolder face,—bade us *dare*, and informed us that Mr. O'Flanagan was from home.—(He was smoking his pipe in the back kitchen.) This last was a masterly stroke, as she fancied we should

hesitate to do anything in Mr. O'Flanagan's absence. Greatly mistaken, Mrs. O'Flanagan! In the first place, we are firmly persuaded that Mr. O'F. is in communication with you; and secondly, we are resolved to have you all ejected before sunset.

"Mrs. O'Flanagan," we said, "your husband's absence is most fortunate; it will save us much trouble. Now, just pack up your things, and clear out peaceably, like a good woman.—We will allow you ten minutes, (considerate bachelors!) and we will promise to send your furniture to any place you appoint."

"Ten minutes to pack up a respectable family like the O'Flanagans! And her beautiful furniture to be bundled off in a nasty farm waggon! She would see us beheaded first!" (Oh, Mrs. O'Flanagan, how *could* you say that, in sight of our corn-fields!)

Hereupon there was a consultation amongst us—a bachelor committee. "Proposed and adopted, that we are in a very awkward predicament. Mrs. O'F. will not go of her own accord. It would be dangerous to attempt to carry her.—She might make handles of our

noses or whiskers. Besides, there are the babies. Imagine three of us with a small O'Flanagan a piece! Then, too, there is the pig. We might fairly confiscate him.—He is simply an embodiment of our corn—but pity pleads! But if he is to accompany them we must drive him ourselves. And how could four of us undertake an obstreperous pig, a furious woman, and three squalling children!" We shouted with laughter at the bare notion. "The alternative, then, is to fetch the parish constable." We announced that such was our intention. In an hour's time he joined us, and we again advanced—eight of us now—to the Malakoff.

The constable was a good-natured, worthy man, of solid proportions, and well up in his work. In his pocket he brought those necessary appliances—iron bracelets, and his staff of office, enough of itself to strike terror into most hearts. Marching up to the door of the shanty with his *posse comitatus*, he must have looked irresistible to everybody but Mrs. O'Flanagan.

The window-shutters were shut and fas-

tened, the door was bolted and barricaded,—the drawbridge, therefore, is up, and the gauntlet down.

The constable summons Mrs. O'Flanagan to appear and surrender. No reply. A couple of us seized a rail from a zig-zag fence, and ran it a thundering tilt against the door, smashing in the panels, and shaking the shanty to its foundations. This set all the small O'Flanagans howling horribly, and brought Mrs. O'Flanagan to one of the upper windows, screaming, swearing, and gnashing her teeth—a very tiger cat,—vowing murderous vengeance on us if we did not begone that moment!

The constable delivered a short and temperate address—rather he endeavoured to do so, but Mrs. O'Flanagan interrupted him with a torrent of abuse and imprecations.

We made a second tilt with the rail. The door flew from its hinges; and Mrs. O'Flanagan suddenly exhibited herself at it with an up-lifted axe, protesting that she would split the first man open who set his foot on that threshold!

At this juncture Mr. O'Flanagan shows himself at the upper window, and unites with his worthy spouse in defiant yells. The small O'Flanagans keep up a sort of perpetual war-whoop under the beds.

Half our party now caused a diversion in the rear, and commenced ripping off the boards; at which Mrs. O'Flanagan mounted to the upper storey again, leaving the lower in possession of the enemy. There she exchanged her axe for her tea-kettle.—It was charged with boiling coffee, and she poured it out lavishly on our heads, encouraging her family to do the like with whatever fluid was available. Down it came, a perfect spout of indescribable combinations on our devoted shoulders!—For one, I got a scald on my right arm, and a cataract of cabbage water on my cap.—My brothers fared even worse. Still we stuck to our job,—quietly and coolly we tore off all the boarding of the lower storey, and this done, we took Mrs. O'Flanagan's axe, and set about knocking away the stanchions which supported the upper. The shanty quivers at each

blow. Presently we all unite in an outcry that it is coming down with a crash. This has the desired effect. Mrs. O'Flanagan scrambles down stairs, with her children and Mr. O'Flanagan at her heels.—“They will leave the shanty, but it shall only be to squat outside.—They are not going to move beyond that, for all the constables on earth.” Constable thereupon produces his handcuffs, and takes Mr. O'Flanagan into custody. He must accompany him to the magistrate, and be bound in his own recognizances to behave himself for the future.

He is escorted to the constable's cart—Mrs. O'Flanagan begging and praying him not to disgrace his race, but stand up for his rights whatever came of it. One of us was to attend as prosecutor. Our prisoner was doggedly sullen all the way. We found the magistrate digging potatoes in his kitchen garden; but he gave us an audience,—heard what we wanted,—praised our humane offer to convey all the O'F.'s and their furniture to any spot they would designate, and ordered sum-

marily, either that Mr. O'F. should submit to our demand, or walk straight thence to durance vile.

Mr. O'F. now submitted to fate;—chōse an Irish settlement at White Plains for his new residence, and declared that he would annoy us no further. The magistrate authorized the constable to put them clear away from Brook Farm. We returned, and Mr. O'F. had an affecting interview with his beloved.—She was in an agony of rage, tore her hair as at a funeral, and still vowed that she would be buried where she sat. But the waggons were packed, the pig tumbled in amongst the crockery, the bairns stowed in their chairs; Mr. O'F. took his seat,—what *could* she do now? To do her credit, (oblivious of the scald and the cabbage water) I will say that she made the best of *her* awkward predicament. Drying her tears and arranging her dress, she walked proudly to the appointed waggon, climbed it,—spitting at the man who stepped forward to assist her, and then,—pronouncing a universal malediction on all of us, and boxing her son and heir's ears for daring to look happy, she scowled fiercely, and so departed.

We were tempted to give her three cheers for her gallant defence of her shanty, but we were afraid of its bringing her bouncing back from the waggon upon us; so we contented ourselves with congratulating each other on our hardly-won victory. If we *could* have illuminated our farm-buildings, they would have been illuminated that night; and doubtless the cows and turkies,—not to say the corn-field, would have engaged the fire-flies to do the same for them.

My moral is—Beware of Squatters!

NOISY NIGHTS.

THE Brook Farm summer nights were far noisier than the days. Under the broiling sun all nature crept into the shade, and said and did as little as possible. You would not hear a sound, except the whirring of the locusts, who could sit in a frying-pan, or the tap of the woodpecker, whose work lies under a per-

petual parasol. But no sooner does the sun set, and the shadow of evening begin to fall, than,—like your city grandees, you dress for an open-air concert. You have to attend it, whether you are musical or not ; and—if that is a recommendation, you get the whole benefit of it without the expense of a ticket.

The principal performers are—

First. The Frogs—endless palaverers. The Bull-frog strikes his gong, and goes “Bong, bong,” as loud as a distant Paxhian. The Yellow-legs twang on bow-strings, or croak gutturally.—They are a melancholy, monotonous set—slow Dutchmen, grunting out an occasional word between their tobacco. The Pipers are more cheerful ; they blow a fife-like note, which is melodious to the ear—perhaps they themselves hop to it. The Bull-frog—I have seen him as big as a rabbit, evidently reserves himself for important occasions as a final authority.—When the smaller fry have sufficiently discussed a matter and seem determined to talk one another down, then Doctor Bull swells up, and utters his dictum—“I am Sir Oracle, and

when I ope my mouth let no dog bark.—Bong ! —bong !—that 's my decision !—Now shut up, or discuss something else.”

Secondly. Tree-toads—little brown fellows, so exactly the colour of the bark of a tree that you could not tell which was which. But stand a step or two back, and that mossy bark will begin to jabber like half-a-dozen monkeys. These chatty souls take a leading part in the concert, and are anything but composing in the neighbourhood of your bed-room window.

Thirdly. The Katydids, a sort of tree-grass-hopper, of a pea-green colour, and with large transparent wings. They utter a deliberate but incessant sound, which, when you have once construed it into “Katy did, Katy didn’t,” you cannot for your life dissociate from it. Fancy twenty pairs of these orators surrounding your house, and bandying their one idea backwards and forwards throughout the live-long night!—Is not that trifling with your feelings? The author was guilty of embodying his anger with them in the following verses :—

THE ORIGIN OF KATYDIDISM.

'T is said, when the world had a juvenile brow,
And lawyers were scarce, as I wish they were now,
That a fairy, well known as an impudent elf,
Formed a daring design to make queen of herself.

The spark of rebellion soon grew to a flame,
And Katy (for that was the naughty one's name)
Was almost a queen, when a sly little chatter
Flew up to head-quarters, and told the whole matter.

Poor Kate was arrested, and sent to be tried,
And counsel engaged to defend either side,
And they popped into court with a smirk and a bow,
In jackets of green, like the Katydids now.

But, instead of an eloquent, able defence,
They only established their own want of sense;
For all they could say was—(although the judge chid)
“Katy didn't, she didn't,” “Katy did, Katy did.

So my lord took exception, and ended the sport,
By ordering the counsellors out of the court,
Who instantly flew to a tree thereabout,
And determined to have the whole argument out.

But they never agreed, although night after night
They argued the case, for each thought himself right

And their sons and their daughters each took to their
side,

And vowed "Katy didn't," or else "Katy did."

The world has grown old, and that tribe passed away,
But new generations have sprung from their clay,
And caught the infection, which runs through their
race,

Of arguing Katy's unfortunate case.

And now, every summer, as evening draws near,
From pine, oak, and elm tree you're certain to hear
"Katy did," "Katy didn't," till, indignant, you cry,
You Rascals! there's one of you telling a lie.

In conclusion; there is a general "hoot-tooting" of Owls in the orchard; "jarring" of wide-mouthed Night-hawks, as they scour the swamps for mice (how the frogs duck their heads as they swoop past!); and "whip-poor-willing" of Whip-poor-wills,—a bird the size of a cuckoo, which, squatting on a rock or shed-roof, either invites you to use the rod, or complains of having had it laid on too heavily.—This point, like Katydidism, is still an open question.

These items from the programme will show you that the concert is *popular* in an artistic

sense only.—With yourself personally, it may be exceedingly *unpopular* ; and I never met with a person who did not get weary of it, and wish it exchanged for a quiet night. What is the use of attempting to sleep, with a tourney of Tomcats going on under your window? and what is the use of attempting to sleep through an American Midsummer night's concert? More than once we have risen in a state bordering on insanity, and gone out into the garden, concluding that, if we *had* to be listeners, it was better to undergo it under the moon and stars than in a stifling bedroom. And the awful part of it is that you know that you cannot stop it. Remonstrate with the eloquence of a Massillon ; charge into the middle of it with a whole phalanx of police ; cry your eyes out in supplication—the concert has begun, and it will go on till daylight ! Those inexorable Frogs and Katydids !—you might as well try to silence a thunderstorm, or a school of charity boys with a plum cake in the middle of them !

Good English people, be thankful that the denizens of your morasses and fields give their

concerts at natural hours, or that, if one or another of them does break out after dark, it is nothing worse than a barn-yard cock or a nightingale.

THE FOURTH OF JULY.

THE fourth of July is the other great American day with "Thanksgiving." It is the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence—the day when the American colonists, in Congress assembled, did a very spirited, and,—as it turned out, a very successful thing. On that day, in the year 1776, they finally dissolved partnership with Old England, and set up in business for themselves. There was a long and fierce fight about it, of course; but at last King George gave his consent, and neither party has since had cause to regret the separation. As a boy, I should decidedly have voted for Independence with both hands, were it only for the annual holiday which it involved. It generally dawned a

blazing hot day—not a cloud as big as a feather; still, sultry, silent—the day of days for a pic-nic. With a pic-nic we always commemorated it. Soon after breakfast the horses were brought round. There was an open omnibus or sociable; a barouche for six; a spring-waggon for two; whilst one of us would be in the saddle—equerry in waiting to the whole party. Then a succession of weighty hampers, iced and fragrant, were stowed away under the coachman's box; and then the ladies tripped out and chose seats; and how happy were all popular coachmen!—What an agreeable sensation it produced to see two bonnets, even if they were sister's or cousin's, squabbling for the place next to you!

These preliminaries arranged, off we trotted for our ten or twelve miles' drive to Tarry Town on the Hudson. Half that distance, however, brought us to the immediate vicinity of that noble river, and from our road we looked down on it. Below lay the village of Flushing, with its pier and fleet of fishing-boats. Then the blue water stretched across a couple of miles to the opposite

shore, where towered the frowning Pallisades—rocky precipices, crowned with verdure, and washing their feet in the flowing tide. Here and there, above and below, were wide ravines, through which you could look far back up smiling valleys, with their corn-fields, cattle pastures, and clusters of houses.—One of these valleys led to Goshen, the famous butter country.

On the water moved vessels of all sizes: yachts gay with pennons; sloops laden with hay; steamers thronged with passengers,—the music of their bands wafted to our ears. It was a spectacle to be remembered.—These eyes have never seen such a vision of earthly glory since.

We now took the river route, and held to it, passing through several villages of note, till we reached a narrow, shady lane, which led us down to “Sunnyside,” the residence of Washington Irving. We used the privilege of almost life-long friendship to alight at his gate, and bring him out of his study. He, nothing loth, loving a merry-making of any kind, would lead us over his beautiful little

villa; show us his treasures (and he has some rare ones); point out his best views of the river—his garden front's on it; insist on our tasting his fruit, and supplying our button-holes with his flowers; and perhaps invite himself to join us in our further rambles. You may be sure we readily found him a seat in this or the other carriage, and tugged up hill again towards Tarry Town. Hereabouts gentlemen's places are plentiful; they have clustered round "Sunny Side" as their centre. Almost all of them have a lawn sloping to the Hudson, and a commodious boathouse, in which we were occasionally beguiled to eat our luncheon. It was so delightful: the ample shade, the outspread waters, and,—shall I add it, the vicinity to inexhaustible supplies of summer luxuries.

But now we were bound for Tarry Town, and would *tarry* nowhere else; at least, that was head-quarters, but our actual destination was the renowned Sleepy Hollow, just this side of it. We are arrived there. The horses are unharnessed, and eating their oats under trees; the hampers are being unpacked in a

cool wood, with a brawling brook working through it. Let us see where we are. It is a large hollow or vale between steepish hills; the road descends into it rather abruptly; at the bottom it crosses the aforesaid brook on a wooden bridge—the bridge athwart which the Headless Horseman hurled the pumpkin at poor Ichabod. To the left lies the mill, and behind it the little mill-pond; to the right, the wood, cut by the brook. The American army lay in this wood after its retreat from the Battle of White Plains, and thence many a brave spirit which had survived the immediate fight, surrendered itself to God; and a hasty grave was dug amidst the leaves. Facing you, as you stand on the bridge but high up on the hill, rises the ancient parish church, built of bricks brought over from Holland, and surmounted with a Dutch St. Peter's cock and vane; its yard filled with mossy stones, covering the mortal remains of Van Tromps and Van Tassels. Climb the hill, and a short walk brings you to the spring by the wayside where the unfortunate Major André, when returning from his infamous plottings with General

Arnold about the betrayal of West Point, stopped to give his horse drink, and was seized by the three militiamen. There is the tree behind which they lay concealed, and from which they sprang. There are the rocks which echoed their challenge, "Who goes there?" his pardonable prevarications; their demand to him to dismount and be searched; his offer of his gold watch and a thousand guineas if they would let him go; their exclamations at the discovery of the papers in his boots; his sighs when they told him that he must accompany them to the American camp; and the sound of his horse's hoofs till they died away.—He went, and I suppose he knew it, from that spot to the gallows!

But of scenes which a master-pen has immortalized, let this suffice. Dinner hath charms, especially a pic-nic dinner. There it is to welcome us, its fair waitresses flushed with the bustle of preparation. Grace is sung. Now we know what those portly hampers contained, and very speedily we ourselves contain their contents, and are ourselves much contented. Play is then the order of the day,

and it never flags. There are ferns, too, to be sought by the less sportive; or sweet voices ring in chorus far and wide.

Who could be tired of such festivities, in such company? We often had English friends with us, to whom all was new, and this doubled every enjoyment. And "Geoffrey Crayon, Esq.," can talk of England like an Englishman—as familiarly and as fondly. Start him off about Stratford-on-Avon or Melrose Abbey, and his bright eyes will sparkle and his tongue wag as briskly as they did thirty years since.

The homeward journey from one such Fourth-of-July-outing was memorable. I was in the spring-waggon with an elder brother; we drove a bob-tailed grey mare—an ugly-tempered brute of the veritable "Cruiser" stamp. About half-way home she began to show symptoms of rebellion. Presently she took to walking.—It was pure vice, and her regular habit when she had a mind to it. We did all we could to persuade her into a more amiable mood, but it was unavailing. We had resort to the whip, and from the whip to a stouter stick from the hedge; and so, by dint of much

belabouring, we got her along step by step, truly thankful for every milestone passed. But any sound which she could possibly construe into a "wo" brought her short up in a second, and brought fresh *woe* to us. Under these circumstances, you may fancy our horror at discovering, as we approached a tavern, a lot of young men pitching quoits in the middle of the road.—We guessed our fate, and awaited it as tranquilly as we could. Jog, jog, jog went the mare up to the young men; then a rogue amongst them called out, "Wo-ho, wo-ho!" We interposed deprecatingly, but it was too late;—the mare came to a dead stop. We laughed of course—hysterically; the young men—boisterously. We pulled at the reins, coaxed, and did not spare the rod; but, with those wags calling out "Wo-ho, wo-ho!" we might as well have plied a boulder or a lamp-post. It was a most humbling not to say agonizing position, but we endeavoured to joke it off, and begged them, as good fellows, to help and not hinder us, reminding them that they might themselves be in a similar fix some fine morning when

they were going to be married. This reflection turned the scale in our favour. They were not bad-natured. Some of them took the mare's head ; others seized the wheels ; others pushed behind ; and, so urged and aided, she had no alternative but to "make progress"—at first slowly and reluctantly, but at last full gallop, when they cast us off with three ringing cheers for ourselves, and one cheer more for the "wo(e)ful mare."

We reached Brook Farm somewhere before sunrise ; our party had been asleep for hours. Need I say that our visions that night were disturbed by *white*-mares, and that we resolved never to judge of a day's pleasuring until we had our nag in our stable ?

THE MIRED OX.

A STONY farm—and Brook Farm was such—involves bullocks. There is always a deal of stone walling to be done, and there is nothing

like a pair of cattle for dragging half-ton boulders and fragments of rock into position. Then, too, there are lumps of the same lying hidden, and your plough was constantly striking them.—These shocks would tear horses to pieces, but oxen move so deliberately, especially when they know that they are working stony ground, that they “bring up” without jerking themselves. Certainly, they are slow coaches; you would not pick them out for carrying a despatch. Dr. Livingstone’s famous “Sinbad,” capable of cantering under a tropical sun, must have had a notably different organization to those we had to deal with. Under such a sun, ours would loll their tongues, and drag one leg after another, as if they were taking a nap between each step;—viewed from a distance, they seemed to be stationary. How they used to try my patience! However, I found the profit of this discipline when, afterwards, I had to travel on the “Eastern Counties” Railway to Cambridge in a four-mile-an-hour train, expecting to be run into at every station; and even jump out

to help tear down palings to feed a given-out engine.

We had two yoke of cattle, one of which we raised ourselves from calves—a black and a white. Being pets, they were spoilt, and when we came to break them in, they fell into the sulks, and thought to master us. We had to tie their tails together to prevent their flying round at a tangent, and looking daggers into each other's eyes; but they tugged so hard to get asunder, that Blackey's tail gave way in the middle, and for the remainder of his days he wagged a stump. I often harrowed a field with them, and had abundant experience of their pernicious ways. At length we resorted to the plan of driving them behind a yoke of sedate and well-educated seniors.—*Their* example did more than all our “wo-ho's” and “wo-gee's.”—In fact, they were obliged to keep the peace, and do their work.

Once we were inveigled into buying a splendid looking pair of dark reds—a perfect match, horns wide as your arms, and with a spice of the “Sinbad” gait about them. Everybody

admired them ; but we soon found that they were the personifications of mischief. When we complained to their former owner, I am sorry to say he laughed, and said, “ You remember, Gentlemen, I only warranted them sound in constitution ; I confess that they are anything but sound in morals ! ”

There was not a latch in the farmyard which they could not lift with their tongues ;—this, of course, gave them the *entrée* to the oat-bin or the hay-mow. There was not a set of bars which they could not drop with their horns, and this gave them the *entrée* to the daintiest fields. They really seemed to wink at each other when you were shutting them in anywhere.—“ *Shan't* we stay here till morning ! ” And their demure, now-*we-will-be-good-boys* appearance continually threw us off our guard.

Another trait : they could hide themselves like hares. Turn them into a meadow with plenty of underbrush in it, and you might hunt it over, and not spy them. They would smuggle themselves away in the bushes ; lie down in a ditch ; or stand facing you behind a tree, turning their hind-quarters as you moved

to the right or the left; you had need of the eye of a Bow-street detective to discover them.

Then, when yoked, they would kick like very battering-rams; the off ox particularly, considered his dignity affronted by any one going within a yard of him.—“Take that, Sir (flinging out), and go on the proper side!” And, if you pressed them to a strain, as in log-hauling, they would fly round, twist the yoke over their necks, and you would have a pair of snorting noses where, a moment before, you had a couple of quiet tails!

The pole-axe was the one remedy for all this bovine wickedness, and it was not long before they went to it.

But I was about to narrate the narrow escape of a very different ox from either of these; one of that steady, well-educated yoke to whom we committed the education of our youngsters. He was grazing with his fellow in the swamp. After it was mown there was, as we supposed, no danger there, for the summer heats dried the bogs to a turf, and even sheep could walk on it. But it would seem that, here and there, there were soft spots, and our unwary ox

was unlucky enough to hit upon one. He was a gaunt, heavy beast, and forthwith began to sink. His efforts to flounder out did but send him deeper into the mire.—When we heard his bellowing, and reached him, he was fast gravitating to some invisible landing-place—a living grave! We shuddered at the prospect, and, judging from his piteous moans and glaring eye-balls, he did so too. Already he had disappeared up to the ridge of his back.—No time was to be lost. The first thing was to run stout twelve foot rails under his chin and tail, so as to distribute his weight over a wider space, and keep his head well up. Then two of us laid hold of his tail, and pulled at that, in order to ease him horizontally. The rest plied every nerve in digging away the soil. Passing neighbours bore a hand with us. Sooty Fairfax was in his element—not mud, but energetic action.—He could not have worked harder had the ox been his own good wife.

Presently we cleared him to the loins. This relieved him; he could breathe more comfortably. Next we proposed to cut a sloping

trench from the solid ground to the quagmire. This was no trifle, but strong and willing arms soon accomplished it. And now we thought that if he would help himself a little the ox would get free. We tried to rouse him to this—shouting, whipping, poking his ribs,—but it was useless. Either the ox had not the strength or the courage for the effort.—We believed it to be the latter; but lest he should be suffering from exhaustion, we forced balls of meal into his mouth, and soused him with pails of cold water. This done, we undergirded him with ropes, and fastening them all to a chain, fairly tugged him out at the heels of a team of cart-horses. Then with our support he managed to stagger to a knoll—*his* Mount Ararat, on which we left him, stranded high and dry, to rally his dilapidated spirits and resume his browsing at his pleasure.

If I mistake not, the big hole which we made is still traceable in the swamp,—an evidence of what a dozen resolute people will do in half an hour for a deserving favourite.

INDIAN CORN.

INDIAN corn, or maize, is a native American growth. It was found in use amongst the Indians by the earliest settlers.—I am not certain but that Christopher Columbus himself returned to Spain with a cob of it in his pocket. To this day the Indian tribes, or their remnants, raise nothing else. Their squaws cultivate it in patches, and then sit and munch it with slices of dried buffalo.—Plenty of dyspepsia in those parts, I reckon !

But not only the Indians : it is the great crop on all American farms—their ornament, their pride, their staple. Barley, oats, rye, are quite fifth-rate considerations in comparison.—Even wheat hides its diminished head beside it. And no wonder. In the first place, there is its beauty. Look at a field of it, standing in straightest lines, as high as your shoulder, with a three foot plume above that ; its graceful pendant leaves—a shining green ; its silken tassels, dangling from each sturdy ear ! It has not a rival.

And then there is its intrinsic worth. What creature is there, excepting your starving Irishman, that does not like it in one shape or another? Cats and dogs will eat it as a flour. Poultry of all kinds depend upon it. Cows, horses, sheep, and pigs want nothing else to fatten on. Babies suck it through bottles—don't they? And as for your enlightened public, they are known to have one hundred and fifty different ways of dressing it. The saying is, Give a black cook a bag of corn meal, and bar him up in his kitchen; and he will turn you out a dinner for six with everything short of real turtle! And when you ask him how he has done it, he grins and tells you that, “as eberry ting—beast, fowl, and oysters—*feed* on Indian corn; Indian corn can *make* eberry ting;”—logic so clear and so cogent that you can only succumb to it with a profound bow.

The land on which you sow it has to have several preparatory ploughings, and be thoroughly workable. Then you cut it out into square yards with a light single-horse share. Your credit is at stake in the mathe-

matical precision of the furrows; so it is a somewhat nervous operation. In the centre of each of these square yards, boys in advance with a pail—or you yourself from an apron tied round your waist—drop four grains of corn. You pull the soil over it with a hoe, and give it a masonic pat ere you pass on to the next interment. This is done in April. The wooing of her warm rains speedily brings it up. It shoots forth a solid spire, which unfolds into strip-like leaves, and grows at the rate of an inch a day. Soon it is ready for its first furrowing and hoeing. The plough loosens the earth, and the hoe gathers it into hills. This process is repeated thrice, when pumpkin seeds are dibbled in here and there amongst the corn, and spring and run with extraordinary rapidity.—In Illinois they declare they chase the pigs; and woe be to the porker around whose leg they entwine a tendril.—He may be held till his bones are bleached.

By this time the corn begins to be too tall for man or horse to work in it. Its crested top rises and attains its height; whereupon the

ears,—which have already sprung from the stump just above each leaf—swell fast.

Then you have the signal for lopping the tops. It is done with a carving-knife. The blow is aimed about a foot short of the ears. The tops are bound into bundles, and stacked round a bunch of stumps. This lopping process throws the sap into the ears, and early in July they are ready for “green corn.” I dare not dilate on that delicacy—boiled as a vegetable, buttered, peppered, salted; and gnawed—opossum fashion—from the hot cob. If the discovery of America had resulted in nothing else—but I restrain my feelings, and prefer to quote the dear American child, who, when travelling on the Continent, and asked by her father if she would not like to go on to Rome, replied, “Uncommonly, Papa;—only I’m afraid it will make us too late for green-corn time.” I am drawn to that child!—Who was she?

As the summer wears on, the corn foliage browns and withers; the tassel, or beard, at each ear-tip, shrivels and dries; the husk parts and opens, and you catch glimpses of the golden grain.

Then comes the husking. Ox carts are drawn into the field, and stand at intervals. The huskers take a row a piece. You seize your ear; rip off the husk; snap the cob with a twist, and throw it into a bushel basket, which, when filled, is carried to the cart. There is more of variety, if your corn happens to be of several colours. You may have sown but one colour; but if your neighbours sow others; the bees manage to mix them for you, and your field may turn out a very Joseph's coat. If this be so, there is perpetual excitement in the discovery—now of a blue and orange, now of a purple and white, now of a “ruby,” now of a “rainbow.” The commonest is the yellow. On a single ear of this latter in our possession—a product of Brook Farm—there are a *thousand* odd grains; and there were four other ears on the same stalk, so that that solitary grain which we cast into the earth in April, in September presented us with its three thousand fold! Good and faithful little steward indeed! May we all be as fruitful under that cultivation which the Heavenly Husbandman bestows on us so unweariedly and lavishly!

When the carts are overflowing, the cattle are hitched-to, and the loads brought to the cider mill, on the upper floor of which they are spread out, lest they should mould. As corn is required, it is shelled off by a clever machine as quickly as you can poke the ears in. The cobs are burnt for firing.

The final stage in this eventful history is the hacking down of the stumps, which, together with the tops (to the extreme discomfort of colonies of field-mice), are housed for winter fodder. Milch cows are fond of them, though you would expect to extract as much nourishment out of an old India-rubber shoe.

The farmer who has had a good Corn crop is a successful man. His hands sit in his pockets with a tranquil air. He whistles jauntily. In that crop he sees—who shall blame him?—so many hard dollars cash; or, if he prefers it, an almost interminable vista of prime beef, fat turkies, and juicy hams!

DEATH IN THE WOODS.

“HARK! what is that?” Shrieks of Murder! murder! shrill and thrilling, but evidently some considerable distance off. Murder! murder! “Where is it?”—we all cried. Murder! murder! “It’s in the wood there!”

It was late in the day,—a sultry afternoon. We were scattered over a clover field (second crop), cocking and carrying—the ox-carts stood half laden. But in a moment we collected round each other. Our hounds, which had been frolicking about us, squatted on their haunches, pointed their keen noses—as if they scented blood—towards the wood, and howled dolefully.—We bade them lie down and be quiet, but they only howled the more. This, however, was but the work of a couple of minutes—at the expiration of that we were all racing helter-skelter over stone walls and fences for the wood whence the cries proceeded, and every step we took they sounded more agonized and appalling. “Run, run!” we

called to each other—"Run, run! or we shall be too late!"

It was half-a-mile's heat, and that not on fair ground, but over the bogs of the swamp, which kept us stumbling and quagmiring. But you can do prodigies under excitement, and I question whether we ever got over half a mile quicker in our lives. We had no weapons with us, except a pitchfork and a knotted stick;—the dogs had stayed cowering under the ox-cart, which, by the way, was left to the good feeling of the bullocks—I hope they took no advantage of our act of confidence! Over the swamp, hopping from bog to bog—over the brook like a lot of hunters—over the zig-zag into the wood; and the wood rang again with those Murder! murder! shrieks, and our shouts in reply, "We're coming, we're coming!"

In the wood we lost sight of each other—we had each to guess for himself the fatal spot. Perhaps I was not so zealous as I might have been to be in the front, and was glad to hear my brothers' voices ahead of me. I followed them as closely as I could however, for possibly the

murderer might designedly make a bolt in their rear, and I had rather not encounter him alone.—He might add *my* scalp to the other. How often had we trodden that same wood, of summer evenings—our blithe feet sinking in the moss, as we rambled about in search of the sweet-smelling azaleas or wild strawberries.—The path I was threading with such a beating heart led, I knew, to a cool gushing spring, beside which we always gathered the largest, and where you were pretty sure to disturb a sipping woodcock or a covey of quails.—But with those hideous cries in my ears, I thought little of these pleasures. And now we were getting within a few paces of the person or persons uttering them. My brothers suddenly turned off at right angles from the path, and then I heard them say, “What’s the matter here?—What is the matter here?” and the piercing shrieks died down into more subdued wailings. I was not far behind, and when I turned off and tore a passage through a lot of brushwood, there on a small cleared place by the rivulet, and shaded by tall trees festooned with grape vines, I beheld my bro-

thers bending down over a woman ; whilst two younger women—her daughters—were wringing their hands, and raving in the most frantic manner imaginable, “ O mother, mother ! are you dead ? are you dead ? ” A glance at the woman’s face showed me that it was even so. The eyes protruded ; the teeth were firmly set ; the dishevelled hair was thrown back from a marble forehead ; the cold perspiration stood in drops. There was no movement, no sound. The spirit was not there. It was indeed death—a ghastly spectacle. The young women declared that she had been shot. She was gathering grapes with them, when a gun was fired at a distance ; a few seconds after, she leapt in the air, and then fell lifeless on the grass without uttering a word. That was their idea ; but, as there was not a trace of blood upon her, we assured them that this could not be the case.—It must have been a fit, or a stroke of paralysis. They were so terrified that they had jumped at the former conclusion, and hence their screams of “ Murder.” But it was bad enough anyhow. An hour before, they had left their home, well and in high spirits,

on this grape-gathering excursion. As they pulled down the vines, she plucked the fruit. She was laughing at them as they hauled together like sailors at one of these live ropes, and was herself mirthfully dangling a bunch of grapes, to be their reward if they succeeded, when the inevitable summons was served upon her, and she was rapt away! As she was a Christian, we endeavoured to assuage her poor girls' grief with the thought of her quick and painless exchange of earth for Heaven—of *their* society for the society of Jesus and the spirits of the just made perfect. “Yes,” they said, “we remember now how often she used to be singing:—

“ ‘I would not live alway—I ask not to stay
Where storm after storm rises dark o’er the way.
The few lurid mornings that rise on us here
Are enough of life’s woes, full enough of its cheer.

“ ‘I would not live alway, thus fettered with sin,
Temptation without, and corruption within—
E’en the rapture of pardon is mingled with fears,
And the cup of thanksgiving with penitent tears.

“ ‘I would not live away. No ! welcome the tomb ;
Since Jesus has lain there, I dread not its gloom.
There sweet be my rest, till He bid me arise
To hail Him in triumph descending the skies.’ ”

We lifted the stiffening corpse on our shoulders, and bore her to her house,—the threshold of which she had but just now crossed, basket in hand, — the daughters sobbing piteously. It was a sort of funeral ; and we ourselves learnt afresh how brief may be the transition from the scene of hilarity to the scene of anguish, and how very short the step is between us and death !

I cannot say that the azaleas and strawberries of that wood ever again had attractions for us ; and even in the furor of our fox-hunts we always gave the particular locality a wide berth.

THE ILL-STARRED COW.

OUR chief stock consisted of dairy cows. I can see them now—Cherry, Betsy, Daisy, Bald-face, and a dozen others. It was mine to milk them, and, if I cannot say, with St. Paul, that these hands have ministered to my necessities, I can say that they drew every drop of milk which we drank at breakfast and tea.

Many a time I have sung,

“Awake, my soul, and with the sun,” &c.,

with my head thrust into a cow's side, and to the accompaniment of the gushing streams.

I got to love my cows, and to fancy my love reflected from their big lustrous eyes. The smell of their hay-scented breath was sweeter than chemists' perfumes. I used to take pride in showing them; and often of a moonlight night I have gone in amongst them, to make sure that they were all comfortable. There they lay in their stalls, chewing the cud, and dreaming of the delicious clover-field in which they had spent the day.

It became necessary to part with one of them. Her name was Spot. She was a stately Devon, with a white star on her forehead,—hence her name. Her sentence was, “to be fattened and sold.” We fed her on corn, with an occasional peck of potatoes by way of variety.

It fell on a day that, my brothers having gone to a cattle fair, I was left in charge of the farm. Towards sunset a man ran in to tell me that Spot had broken into the buckwheat, and eaten so much that she was groaning for breath. I hastened to the yard, and it was indeed so. Poor Spot was in a terrible plight: her skin stretched to the very utmost by the inward fermentation—her eyes protruding from their sockets—her tail stretched out straight—her mouth open and panting.

No time was to be lost. It was proposed to try and relieve her by stabbing her in a safe place, and so allowing the fermentation a vent. I consented; but no great good came of it,—apparently it only increased Spot’s distress. What was to be done? If we left her alone she

would certainly suffer more and more, till death released her, and so dying—dying a natural death—she could not be eaten; whereas if we killed her at once, she would suffer no more, and we might turn her into capital beef. This was the alternative—a grave matter for a boy of fourteen to decide upon. I allowed mercy to turn the scale: “Let us put her out of her misery,” I said, “come what will of it.” The fatal axe was brought, and in another moment she was insensible to further pain. In half an hour’s time she was slung up,—a neatly-dressed carcase, in the granary.

The butcher happened to pass as we were finishing. I told him the story, and begged him to make me an offer. Having looked at Spot’s mortal remains, and pronounced them prime; he could not but propose a satisfactory price. He cut her in two, put her into his cart, paid me the money, and drove off, laughingly acceding to my one request, that none of Spot should be our next Sunday’s sirloin.

When my brothers arrived on the morrow, they complimented me on my discharge of the

lieutenancy under critical circumstances; and, I believe, were as pleased to have the thirty dollars in their pockets, as they would have been to have had "Spot" back again in the yard.

Young people never know how suddenly they may be called on to show what they are made of. They should pray daily for a right judgment in all things, and courage to meet and overcome all emergencies.

THE REBEL PEACOCK.

WHEN the ground was hard frozen, farming operations were pretty much at a standstill, and—the stock fed and watered—we could turn gentlemen and take a sleigh drive. That is fun, and no mistake! The sleigh is a great pair of skates, with a light open carriage set on them. You can have it painted to your taste; ours was sky-blue, and the runners came up above the splashboard in the shape of

two swans' heads. Into the sleigh we toss a buffalo robe a-piece, and then glide away,—our horses wanting no whip,—the bumping of the wheels exchanged for the enchanting jingle of the sleigh-bells. — These bells are hollow globes, with a bullet for a tongue, and are of all sizes and tones: they sell them attached to straps; and you buckle as many chimes as you please round your tandem or your four-in-hand.

“ Now, coachman, beware of snow-drifts! *Don't* upset yourself and the ladies!” I am sorry to say that the latter is rather a propensity of bachelor coachmen. — It is considered lawful roguery, like the kiss stolen under the misletoe-bough: the ladies being well wrapped up in furs, and the snow being exceedingly soft, the “ accident ” is met with shouts of laughter, and the offending Jehu gets off with a handsome apology.

One fine day, driving in this style, without sailing orders or compass, we found ourselves on King's-bridge, crossing Spuyten-Devil Creek—which severs New York Island, from Westchester County. Just on the other

side of the bridge—if I recollect rightly—our attention was attracted to a flock of peacocks strutting about in their lordly way. There were twenty or more of them, old and young. Now, we much wanted one as a mate for an unhappy pea-hen of ours—unhappy, we thought, because she had no kith or kin of her own: she had come to us solitarily, and she had remained a lone widow for a year or more past. Our bachelor feelings often pitied her, especially as the jabbering Guinea fowls seemed to make sport of her, and she had no one to espouse her quarrel.

The owner was proud—as well he might be—to show us his “birds.” They gave the barnyard quite a palace look; and when they spread and shook those hundred-eyed fans of theirs, it was like standing amidst a blaze of emeralds and sapphires.—Lone widow of Brook Farm, what would be *your* emotions if set down here?

We asked if he would sell? He said, “Take your choice.” They were shut into a shed. We picked out a royal fellow, with a tail as long and as gorgeous as a queen’s

train. The dollar was paid; peacock's legs were tied—not the pleasantest style of going to your wedding,—and with no end of vigorous “Ca-haws,” sympathetically responded to by his afflicted relatives, we bore him to the sleigh, and thence to his future home.

We were great poultry fanciers,—though it is but candid to say, chiefly with a view to the market. Occasionally you might have beheld us chasing up scores of Dorkings,—which had been our admiration for the twelvemonth, and massacring them remorselessly for the public good: our turkeys and geese, too, were in continual jeopardy of their lives. But,—these Thuggish propensities notwithstanding, we took a paternal interest in our feathered family. We had Muscovite ducks of immense weight; varieties of pigeons; bantams; Polands, and Kentuckies—a sort of Cochin laying an egg every day in the year, and two (so they said) on the fourth of July! The geese had the range of the swamp, and were half wild. The turkeys walked the fields in line, and swept the grasshoppers before them, fattening on them wonderfully. The “Gui-

neas,"—gipsy-like and unsociable, skulked about the lanes, made their nests in unfindable places, and eventually reappeared with a bevy of tiny strangers simpering at their heels.

Now, we fancied that my Lord Peacock would reign amongst these discordant groups as King; and particularly, exercise a salutary influence on that very perky little personage, Bantam Cock, Esq., who was fighting from morning to night.

We determined to confine "my Lord" for a week—softening the rigour of his imprisonment however, with the society of the "lone widow," hoping that we should thus attach him to the place. But it was poor work for both, and we were right glad when the week expired, and he was invited to ascend the barnyard throne. "Now, Bantam Cock, Esq., come and make your submission and resolve to abandon your pugnacity!" Not a bit of it!—He went up to him, winked his small fiery eye in his face, crowed jeeringly at his sweeping tail, and challenged him to mortal combat on the spot; and but that

his majesty's mind was altogether occupied with a certain dark design, Bantam Cock, Esq., would that moment have had his impudence finally and for ever knocked out of him.

“A dark design,” I said.—Yes, verily. No sooner was King Peacock clear of the cowshed, than he hopped for the yard-gate, flew upon it, and then went off into the air—booming and screaming like a red-hot shell, straight as though by compass, for Kingsbridge and Spuyten-Devil Creek! It rather took the breath out of us; but we were not going to stand that. We knew that he would presently be tired of playing the rocket and come down like the stick; so we gave chase,—across the road,—across the orchards,—across the river meadows, to the Aquehung. Here his majesty alighted for a moment; but seeing us pursue, he bounded over the water and ran up the opposite hill-side. We had to make a considerable detour for a log bridge; and when we again sighted him he was racing along at the top of his speed three fields ahead. Being swift of foot

I was in advance of my brothers, and,—after another mile, found myself alone, and gaining on my prize, who stuck to his legs. I said to myself, “If you do that long I shall have you, for we are a match there.” And now, I was not thirty yards behind him.—I felt sure that I should overtake him.—I even chuckled in anticipation of my victory; when—whe-e-e-ew! his majesty out with his wings once more, and up for the clouds! This was too much for human patience. I seized a stone and hurled it at him with a parting blessing, but not with the remotest idea of hitting him. Strange to say, however, my stone pinged neatly on the back of his crested head: he fluttered: then fell heavily on the ploughed land! I pounced upon him, fearing that he would rally; but it was needless. A faint squeak,—a few kicks,—and the rebel peacock was a corpse!

I assure you I was anything but elated.—I had no wish to rank with Oliver Cromwell and other regicides. But what is done, can’t be mended. I flung him on my shoulder and trudged for the log bridge. There my brothers

were waiting for me ; and there,—to my relief, I received their acquittal. They said that such a recreant must have been deposed : and they were still more complaisant the next day when the cook set him down, smoking hot and savoury, on the dinner-table.

THANKSGIVING DAY.

I HAVE already said that this day shares the universal American heart with the fourth of July.

It is a good old Puritan bequest to the nation. The Pilgrim Fathers began the custom at Plymouth, the first Christian village in the United States, now a flourishing town ; and long may it continue such,—the birthplace and cradle of “ Thanksgiving Day ! ” What a want it is in a Christian country like England ! How strange that the deep religious feeling of the community does not demand it ! We hope

to live to see it an annual observance, and kept as Christmas Day is, from the Hebrides to the Land's End.

In America, at first it was confined to the eastern States, but now it is a jewel in the crowns of all of them.—We have more faith in it than in the “stars and stripes” as a national defence, for “them that honour me I will honour.”

About the middle of October each Governor issues a proclamation, calling on the people of his State to set a particular day apart for the purpose of assembling in their places of worship to give praise to Almighty God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for all his goodness and lovingkindness to them and the nation generally, during the twelvemonth past. He notices any special favours which should draw forth gratitude, and concludes by requesting that all sects and parties will unite in the commemoration. No proclamation is so looked for, and none—I venture to say—more cheerfully obeyed.

I do not seek to provoke a smile here, but,

strangely enough, you get to connect Thanksgiving Day with an affair of a widely different character—pig-killing. The two things are contemporaneous. Always, as the Governor's proclamation appeared in the papers, the farmers of West Chester country, at any rate, were making preparations for clearing their sties.—Just before, or just after, you were sure to have the air filled with the squeals of dying hogs; and, drive wherever you would, you would see them—looking loveliest in death—hanging in rows on a rail between two crotched posts, and the farmers and their friends admiring them.—What bloodthirsty fellows farmers are! But this by the way.

Thanksgiving Day was a green spot in our anticipations; schools gave holidays; families gathered into narrower circles of love; city cousins arrived overnight to share our country pleasures. The very finest turkey—the peer amongst peers—was handed over to the cook.—(I dare not say how many *tons* of turkey are consumed in New York on that one day.—The marvel is that there are enough live ones left to keep up the breed.) Sisters lay out all

their art on pumpkin pies; and new bonnets and neck-ties are to be seen hid in drawers, in a chrysalis state, ready and waiting for this grand Thanksgiving Day.

It commences with a service at church. Shops are shut; railway traffic ceases; your cattle are turned out in the fields and enjoy an extra Sabbath. You listen at your open windows to the ring of village bells; and as it is Indian summer—serenest of weathers, everything reminds you of Bryant's sweet lines,—

“ And now when comes the calm mild day, as still such
days will come,
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their wintry
home,—
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all
the woods are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the
rill,
The south wind searches for the flowers, whose fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream
no more.”

After church you assemble for dinner,—such a

dinner! Bless the cook—you can smell it from the farthest field. But it is a little late,—your cook *will* be late on great occasions.—She does it on principle, that you may learn your dependence on her, and associate a thought of her rosy cheeks with every mouthful you take. The turkey would blush if he could hear the praises lavished on him. The pumpkin pies are declared to be worthy of M. Soyer himself. Then toasts are drunk—loyal ones. “The President;” “Dear Old England and her Queen;” “Our Happy Country;” and “All absent kith and kin,” in a bumper. After this we adjourn for music,—thanksgiving hymns, and innocent mirth, whereof I will simply say, that those fowls had the most undisturbed night’s rest which slept furthest from the house: and so loth were we to let the day go, that we used to hang on to its last shred, and even allow it to drag us over the boundary-line into to-morrow morning!

Thanksgiving days are good for body, soul, and spirit.

“YOUR POLISH EXILE.”

It was a dismal November night. An easterly gale was blowing—the storm-spirits moaned and shrieked—the surrounding trees lashed each other furiously—chimneys roared—shutters banged. There was rattle and clatter everywhere. The very house seemed to be holding on with both hands, like a maintop-man in a hurricane.

The clock had struck eleven, and we were thinking of retiring, when a strange sound fell on our ears—a human voice pleading piteously. The queer part of it was that it began under our feet, went round and round in circles, then wandered away towards the pantries, and presently gathered itself into a highly demonstrative focus at the door which led from the back kitchen, down by a flight of stairs, into the capacious cellar, famous for its enormous rats. Could it be a widowed rat, or a party of rats, come up with a petition against steel traps? No! no four-legged creature except a wounded Jack hare ever vented such hullabalooings as

those ! But if it is a mortal being, what sort of a one is it ? Can it be the last of the Mohicans, favouring us with the war-whoop and variations ? Can it be an assassin, trying to strike terror into our hearts, before he proceeds to bloodshed ? Can it be an escaped lunatic, crying out for a dressing-gown to cover his nakedness ? Can it be Captain Kidd the pirate, frisking about in his chains ?

You say, “ You cowards, why not look and satisfy yourselves ? ” Fair and softly, gentle reader—at eleven o’clock on a bellowing November night, you do not feel in a hurry to open a door on the other side of which you will have to confront a phenomenon. We *will* look shortly, but let us make a few preparations.—We considered that they were abundantly justified by those mingled yells and wailings in the very bowels of the House. Besides, we were responsible for parents and sisters, not to mention several young lady friends.—What will not valorous youths do for the sanctity of the domestic hearth !

If you wish to join us, then, arm yourself as we do, with walking-sticks, fire-irons, and a

bull's-eye lantern. Our chief reliance, however, was on a rusty blunderbuss, which—if it would only go off—would carry a whole quart of slugs into any adversary's bosom. This piece of ordnance was committed to the best shot amongst us, and he was charged not to pull trigger till the glare of the bull's-eye revealed the phenomenon's left breast.—If, on pulling the trigger, there was no discharge, he was to spring the bayonet and make a death-thrust. We decided that there should be no exception in favour of lunatics.—The law (of self-preservation) must have its course. But we begged him to be careful of his brothers' brains, and—in no case to run away.

Thus arrayed, we entered the back kitchen, and placed ourselves,—blunderbuss in advance. The boldest of the party now stepped forward, and challenged through the keyhole—"Who are you?" Whereupon there was a reduplication of the outcry—I could compare it to nothing but a laughing hyena and a Bengal tiger in combat.

"Who are you, I say?—What business have you there?—What do you want?" (Capital

questions!—always ask them whilst there is a good stout door between you and your phenomenon.) No intelligible answer—simply a fresh outburst at each question. “Come, come, now—this is nonsense.—We are not going to be taken in.—You must tell us who you are.—We are all ready for you!” I thought that the “ready” was rather a stretch of boastfulness, for I for one, felt exceedingly *unready* for him; and Blunderbuss himself wavered slightly, and looked round to see if the way was open for retreat.—But our reckless leader said it, and repeated it, and that deliberately and in short sentences—“We—are—all—ready—for—you here—we shall have to shoot you or knock you down if you don’t tell us who you are!”

Still no intelligible reply—nothing but bluster and blubber. “*Is* it a man?—Isn’t it the French donkey on his hind legs? or a strayed baboon from the woods?”

It has resolved itself into this—the door must be opened, and we must see for ourselves. “Now, Blunderbuss, *do* be steady (he won’t, though)—now, all of you look out for a rush.—Whoever he is, he has no relatives

—don't let him escape !” I here pictured him to myself—a savage of some kind, tearing through the drawing-rooms, with us at his heels, and thence ascending to the bedrooms and terrifying the now happily unconscious sleepers—what a scene!—felled at last, and slaughtered in somebody's boudoir !

To return. “Blunderbuss, are you sure that you are on full cock ! (He was.)—Then I will let him in on you.” (What an exhilarating prospect !) Slap goes the top bolt,—slap the bottom;—wrench goes the key—we take a long breath—the door is thrown wide open ! Blunderbuss “exercised his judgment” (as he said), and did *not* fire. There before us, stood a six-foot figure, in a gray soldier's cloak—the face lean, wan, and “bearded like a pard”—the hands clasped supplicatingly—the whole crowned with a towering fur cap ! It is a mercy that in our excited state we did not do him some damage ; but the clasped hands and agonized features speedily appealed to our better feelings. What *his* feelings were at beholding us drawn up in that menacing attitude were evident.—He imagined that his last

moment had arrived, and he was going down on his knees, jabbering rapidly and deprecatingly a language which we now guessed to be Polish, for the “Pole” was unmistakable. We saw that he was harmless—a stranger and foreigner in distress. We talked bad Parisian to him, but he did not understand it.—Then bad Dutch; but he did not understand that.—We would not mock his sufferings with Greek or Latin. We therefore signalled to him with our fingers to rise and follow us, and that he was welcome, and that he should have something to eat and drink. It was such a relief not to have had to commit a murder that we became quite affectionate over him—seated him at the kitchen table, got him bread and cheese and sherry, and insisted on his exchanging his wet boots for worsted slippers; for all which attentions he appeared to be exceedingly grateful, volleying forth his thanks in a ceaseless flow of incoherent expressions.

You inquire how he came to be in the cellar. I did not tell you, that there was a door into it from the yard. This should have been

fastened, but by accident it had been left ajar. The poor Pole must have wandered from the coach-road, along which he was travelling—he knew not where; for he had but just landed in New York, and had not too much wits under his fur cap. After fumbling his way in the dark, he probably caught sight of our window lights, struck for the House, crept in out of the gale, at the first open door, and then,—finding himself in a sort of endless dungeon, had begun to bemoan himself—as we heard, running round and round, till he hit on the back-kitchen stairs, and so reached the spot where we met him with those military honours. This was our idea of it, and I dare say it was correct.

As it was now near midnight, we consulted together about what we should do with him. One plan was to sit up with him till morning in the kitchen; but we voted that a shabby want of confidence in our guest. Finally, we concluded to take him up with us to our own apartment, and give him a bed to himself.—We could watch him there as well as anywhere,

and it looked more hospitable. He accompanied us with the utmost docility. We showed him his cot, and set him the example by undressing ourselves. He threw aside his cloak, doffed his bearskin, and then laid himself on the counterpane as he was; and whilst we were kneeling, and till we blew out the candle, he busied himself with muttering prayers to “*Sanctissima Maria*,” and piously crossing himself. We had intended to be awake by turns on sentinel duty, but we nodded at our posts. When we woke it was broad daylight, and our Continental friend was busy with his mutterings and crossings again. We were somewhat startled at first,—till we revived our recollection, to see a hairy six-foot life-guard occupying the place of a particularly amiable brother. We signalled to him to get up; but he shook his head, and pointed to his stomach,—as much as to say that he could do his washing better after breakfast. This was a relief, for we did not care to present him at the family table, though Polish exiles in America—as in England, do find favour in certain eyes. At the

breakfast-table we announced with a flourish of trumpets that we had "the great Count Flustery-blusterybrowski,—the ex-King of Poland, up in our bed, and that he would like a cup of hot coffee!" The ladies were surprised!—of course they were; and they were still more surprised when they heard our story. "What!"—they said—"a horrid creature like that, sleeping and breakfasting in your bed!" "Now, dears, do be quiet; he is indeed a Pole—a handsome fellow.—He may be Pulaski's great-grandson—he may be a man of whom the Emperor of All the Russias stands in fear." "Yes," they said,—“and he *may* be—a PICKPOCKET.” We never trifled with ladies' opinions. "Give us a cup of hot coffee and some bread and butter for the poor wretch, and we will send him away."

We stopped the mail; paid his fare to New York; put a few shillings into his palm (didn't he clutch them!), and bade him adieu. And from that day forth the name of the great Count Flusteryblusterybrowski became a household word amongst us. But we did not then, nor do we now, repent that we forbore to smash him like a cockroach on

the back-kitchen floor,—that we revived his inner man with sherry,—and that we rested his gaunt bones in our own bed.

AMATEUR MARKETING.

AMONGST a packet of garden seeds sent us, was one of citron melon. This is a melon about the size of your head, round as a ball, and of a richly-mottled green colour. It is not eaten raw, having a nauseous, acrid taste; but it makes excellent preserve. We had planted a dozen or more hills of these, amongst those delectable first-cousins of theirs, the “musk” and “water” melon, which in America grow abundantly in the open ground, and to incredible weights.—You cannot lift some of them. Well, the aforesaid citron melons liking the Brook Farm soil, gave us an enormous crop. There were hundreds of them, and a single one was a supply

for a large family. What should be done with them? "Let us speculate in them.—Let us take them to the New York market, and turn a few honest dollars on them." The saying pleased us. We loaded a double-horse waggon with them;—packing them carefully in hay that they might not be bruised; and, as it stood under the shed ready to start, all the family came out and looked at it; and our hopes ran high.

As we should have to walk the horses the whole way, or at least trot very gently, and the market people are such early birds, it was settled that the brother and myself, who undertook supercargoship, should set out at eleven o'clock overnight, so as to be in the city by five or half-past. As it was to be full moon, we thought that this would be rather agreeable than otherwise. We went to bed with the fowls, and were awoke to turn out for our work just as all the others were turning in for their sleep. In greatcoats, comforters, and top-boots, the Man in the Moon saw us bring out our nags; rein them; throw in a

wrapper for our feet, and begin our eventful journey.

It was the brightest full-moon I ever remember. We could read small print as plainly as at noon. The American atmosphere, especially when—as now, there was a slight frost, is splendidly clear, and gives the heavenly bodies an awful brilliancy. The only sounds which we heard were the clatter of our own wheels and hoofs, and now and then the braying of a hound, or the querulous hoot of an owl. We jogged along, sometimes dozing, sometimes chatting, sometimes running by the waggon-side to quicken our circulation. Now, we passed under a huge oak, on which—according to tradition—three “cowboys” or Tories had once hung till their carcasses rotted and fell. Now, we were abreast of a group of Indian graves, whence issued—as nervous people declared—all kinds of horrible moans. Now, we drove by a cedar knoll, the scene of a bloody skirmish during the revolutionary war, where, on the anniversary night, scared travelers saw tall grenadiers in scarlet uniforms sitting motionless with their heads in their

laps, and sturdy Connecticut yeomen's skeletons hunting about for their skins. These were not the pleasantest reminiscences; but we kept up our courage and got by them all in peace. At the halfway inn we watered our horses, and exchanged civilities with other farmers warming themselves over a roaring fire. Resuming our seats, we soon came to Harlaam Bridge; and crossing Spuyten-Devil Creek, found ourselves on the Fifth Avenue,—a straight, broad, Macadamized road of seven miles in length, with houses, kerbstones, and gas-lamps,—the sure signs of "The City," as New York is familiarly called. On this Avenue you met thousands of vehicles. It is the principal metropolitan artery; and here of a fine afternoon gentlemen bring out their trotters and show their paces.—Seven straight miles of flint, are a fair test of what they are and what they can do.

By daybreak we were entering the Bowery. It was strange, but like belated bats we shunned the morning light.—We fancied that everybody was looking at us; and we were conscious of those wretched sensations,—as if

one had done something wicked,—which you always have after spending a night out of bed, and which you do not get over for a week.

But now we were on the verge of business. We settled our rate of charge, anticipating a swift sale and a speedy return with a lightened waggon.—O castle in the air! nothing was swift and speedy but thy demolition!

First we drove to Washington-market, on the North River side of the city. Like all the New York markets, it is an immense covered area, containing in itself supplies for a hundred thousand mouths, and every variety of article from a dead bear down to a sprat.

As we drew up, a number of market-women surrounded us, and asked what we brought. When we told them, they made wry faces and turned on their heels! This was anything but cheering; but we joked with them, and endeavoured to humour them into buying, though it was but a couple apiece. But—"No! not they!" "Please yourselves, then, my good women; it is nothing to us."—(Was it not, -though!) My brother picked out a specimen, jumped

down, and ran into the market to try what personal influence would do at the fruiterers' stalls. He was gone a painfully long time; and meanwhile I was the butt of these odious women with their baskets on their heads, who took advantage of my youth.—Under the fire of their tongues I felt like an unfortunate subject on a glass-legged stool, giving out electrical sparks to a dozen tormenters' knuckles!

Yes, my brother was gone a *very* long time, and every moment I imagined that I should see him emerging from the crowd with a swarm of eager purchasers at his heels. But presently, to my surprise, he crept crouching over from the opposite side of the street, was on the waggon-box in a second, and, whipping the horses into a canter, rounded the corner of the market as dashing as if we were a four-in-hand.

He then broke the news to me that the fruiterers had already more citron melons than they wanted, that they were considered quite unsaleable, and that he believed that we had got into—a mare's nest! However, we would

make another attempt. And now we were at Fulton-market, on the East River side. Again we were met with open arms.—“Have y’ got taters there?” No. “Pumpkins?” No. “Happles?” No. “Carrots?” No. (How unwise is this keeping them in suspense—what will they say when we make the disclosure!) *Citron melons, my friends.*—“Citron melons!—Bah!—Why don’t you bring pigeon’s-milk?—Take them to the arsenal!”—(Meaning, that they were only fit for 24-pounder balls!—How *could* they be so rude!)

Again my brother disappeared, with his precious specimen protruding under his great coat like a plum-pudding. Again, after a protracted absence, he popped upon me from an unexpected quarter; and his melancholy smile repeated the result of his Washington-market tour,—“*Not one!—not one!*”

And now it was broad day. It was getting on towards breakfast-time;—that over, we knew that gentlemen and ladies would be coming for their morning purchases; and what if some of our fair acquaintances

should recognise us!—It was too intolerable to contemplate. My brother for the third time descended, drew a good-natured marketman aside, and in confidence offered him the entire waggon-load for a dollar—just to cover expenses! But he shook his head.—“He would not have them for a gift.”

This brought matters to a crisis. It was evidently merely trifling with our own and others' feelings to thrust our melons in the public face any more. We should probably have the police interfering; and, perhaps, figure that same evening in the penny papers. One's reputation is worth all the citron melons that grow between the poles. So we strewed the hay over them; pretended to be entirely indifferent; spoke—loud enough to be heard—of doing them all into jam for ourselves; and, cautiously selecting our route through back streets, hurried homewards as fast as our horses could carry us.—You abominable citron melons! you may be bruised black and blue for aught we care. Our sole anxiety was lest a mob should pursue us shouting “*Citron melons! Citron melons!*” And we did not

draw our breath comfortably until we were safely across Spuyten-Devil Creek and Harlaam Bridge, and wending our way through the silent, shady lanes of the country.

How we groaned in spirit though, at the prospect of meeting our family ! But they bore it in a truly Spartan manner, laid all the blame on the New York market-people, and begged us to hold up our heads. We had no rest, however, till the citron melons were thrown to the hogs and devoured.—We felt that we could not sleep in peace whilst there was so much as the rind of one aboveground.

And from that day forward I had a horror of citron melons. I never saw one growing, but the old grudge broke out again, and I wanted to kick it.

OUR PACK.

BROOK FARM was environed with woods, and nearly every wood had its brace of foxes. You might see their hole under a ledge of rock, into which nothing short of blasting could give you an entrance. In that hole,—not more than a couple of yards off from you, they lay—you knew, asleep by day, and out of it—you knew, they issued stealthily at twilight to procure a hot supper.—You knew that they lay asleep there by day, by the smell; you knew that they did *not* lie asleep there at night, by the mysterious disappearance of ducklings and pullets. These disappearances became more frequent in the spring, when Mrs. Reynard was supposed to be blest with a family.—The young Reynards must be provided for.—*They* were not particular as to the “how” and the “where;” all they cared for was plenty and a variety. It was anything but gratifying to find the familiar feathers of your cock or hen at the mouth of the burrow, and

picture the young R.'s cracking jokes over the white-meat, or quarrelling for the gizzard.

Wonderfully did the whole party manage to keep out of sight from year's end to year's end! We likened them to evil spirits—real, but invisible. Go into the yard early in the morning before the dew was gone, and your nose said, “A fox! a fox!” but your eye never saw him. He *had* been there.—He had walked round the fowl-house—peeped in at the pigs—sniffed at the stable-door—lapped at the horse-pond—trotted up and down the road—stretched his claws against the black walnut—even sat and scratched himself under your bedroom window.—He did it three hundred and sixty-five times a-year; but you never caught so much as a glimpse of him.

For the suppression of these marauders we kept a pack of hounds—an exceedingly limited pack, as it consisted of a single couple; but then several farmers around kept the same, and were always ready to lend them when we wanted a hunt. The evening before, we would send and beat up recruits—six or eight.

These,—if not accustomed to work together,—at least understood their business individually—namely, first, to turn Reynard up ; secondly, to yell melodiously ; and thirdly, to chase him as long as they had a leg to stand on.

Our couple were named “ Help ” and “ Hold.” They were of the “ blood royal,” as the comical tailor of whom we had them as pups constantly reminded us.—“ Of the blood royal, gentlemen ; you can tell it by the geography of their countenances.—Their father and mother were ‘ Prince ’ and ‘ Princess ; ’ of course, therefore, their grandparents were ‘ King ’ and ‘ Queen,’—and Help and Hold won’t disgrace their ancestry ! ” Thus he would talk as he walked to the ground with us,—for he was a fox-hunting genius, with a perfect passion for the sport, and thoroughly informed in all fox-and-hound traditions.—Yet he would conscientiously tear himself away at a certain hour, to cut Mr. So-and-so a tailcoat, or put a patch on Master So-and-so’s pantaloons.

But I was speaking of Help and Hold. They were allowed to be beauties. Help was

light-built, slim, sharp-muzzled, and dark in his red and black,—his tone a pitch or two too high for my ear. Hold was larger, taller, heavier—her colours brighter, and with the loveliest of dispositions. She was a universal favourite, and my special property.—To this day my heart kindles with a boyish enthusiasm as I picture her with her paws on my shoulders, doing her best to return my caresses.—I mourn her whenever I pass a fine dog. She was as playful as a kitten, yet bold withal, and true to her duty.—If she purposed anything, you could not turn her from it by ordinary expedients.

Help and Hold were handed to us from the basket. Their earliest achievement boded well for their future distinction. They began yelling amongst some cedars on the hill-side. We thought it was only a rabbit, and took no notice. But the yelling grew rampant, and we were obliged to look; and there, lo and behold! was Reynard himself—a veteran, with a white-tipped tail—ambling across the swamp, with Help and Hold roaring at his

heels.—He was a dignified fox, and was not going to hurry himself for a couple of puppies; but, nevertheless, he fled before them, no doubt much chafed at their impudence. *Prenez garde*, Mr. R.; we shall not be puppies long.—Perhaps you will live to drag that dainty tail of yours somewhat faster to our music! That feat made us proud of Help and Hold, and fully established their claim to a monarchical pedigree.

In the winter,—directly the frost set in, we began the campaign in earnest. Help and Hold were joined by Spot and Dash, and Tip and Ty, and Buck and Forester. If a slight snow had fallen, so much the better. We would draw the woodskirts—seldom in vain. Now one hound and now another would give tongue.—“Reynard is hereabouts somewhere!” Then a decided yell—“I have started him!” Then a general outburst—“There he goes!”—and they are all away after him; and the echoes ring again with their sonorous outcry.

We followed at our leisure; for he would be

pretty sure to turn, and make for his castle. Our plan was to take post on what we guessed would be his backward track, and there await him, gun to shoulder. His favourite runs were along ridges or down dry water courses.—He might be expected through certain gates, or over certain stone walls; there we waylaid him, and one or another was fortunate enough to get the shot which put an end to his buccaneering forays. You await him in silence, afraid that your very breathing will alarm him. The hounds are half a mile off, but they are pushing him, and that, in your direction. Another five minutes, and you reckon that he is close at hand: but despite your reckoning, his appearance, so far in advance of his noisy pursuers, is always a surprise.—“Hark! what is that?”—a rustling of dry leaves—a soft footfall—a quick panting; and, like a goblin, the red rogue flits by you, tongue lolling, brush bespattered with mud. Now,—if you have the nerve for it, over with him!—It must be quick as a flash, or he will vanish. Unless you are a steady shot, he will only scamper twice as fast for

your gunpowder salute ; but if you kill him, you pick him up, and throw him athwart the crotch of a tree. The hounds drop in one by one, bellowing furiously over his blood, and claiming a sight of him held aloft, if not a tug at his flesh by way of luncheon. I was sorry when the chase ended thus ; but the country round was so full of holes, that you would never pull your fox down in a fair run,—and if *he* resolved to be shabby, why should not we ?

On one occasion, an English friend was staying with us, and we promised him an American fox-hunt. It was a splendid morning, and we all felt eager for the fray. We cast off in our own wood, and scarcely had we done so when Hold rang the first bell, and the merry chime set in vigorously.—“Tally-ho ! tally-ho !” Yes, there he is, cantering right in front of us over the field for the opposite wood,—hounds not fifty strides behind him—ourselves, scattered. I ran for the road which I thought he would be crossing, and concealed myself in a hollow

stump. The hounds approached ; they rushed by ; it was evident that I was too late.— I leapt out just in time to see Reynard climbing a cliff out of gunshot ;—he had reached the road before me. I cheered on the dogs, and my pet Hold seemed to spring to it afresh at my voice. Shortly after, our whole party joined me, and we continued the chivy for two Irish miles, if I ever ran one. Then, to our chagrin, the music ceased ; and as we went ahead, the hounds met us with that sort of dejected expression which a baffled dog wears so unmistakably. We led them forward, and at a particular spot there was such an odour, and so many traces of a scuffle—hair and gore—that we could not doubt but that Reynard had come to grief,—but where was he ? We examined the hounds' mouths and paws, but no signs of assassination.—Neither was there any man or building in sight. We had to give it up as a riddle, and wander home disconsolate—our English friend quizzing us on the very blank finale of our American fox-hunt !

The same afternoon, however, a person drove by, and asked if those were our hounds which had been out, and at such a time? They were. "Would you like your fox?" Uncommonly. "Go to Mr. Wriggle's barn, and you will see him.—He shot him as he was crossing his land." We called on Mr. Wriggle, and he confessed his deed, and handed over the fox. Our English friend received the brush, on making the *amende honourable* for his quizzing.

I should not like fox-hunting as it is carried on in England, where so much time and money are wasted on it, and where foxes are actually *preserved* to become sport. But certainly, — done in American style, it was harmless enough ;—it rid us of troublesome vermin, and afforded us necessary exercise.

THE CONFLAGRATION.

A SOUTHERN relative had transferred her property to the North, and was looking for a residence. Visiting us at Brook Farm, she was so captivated with it, that she asked to be allowed to build a house on a sandy knoll, on the other side of the road, within bow-shot of us. It was so settled. The knoll was planted with acacias, an entrance gate set in the wall, and a rustic bridge thrown across the brook into our kitchen-garden. Then the foundations were dug, and a good-sized Gothic villa erected,—all of wood. The hall walls were tastefully decorated with paintings by my brothers. An upstairs room,—set apart for a museum, was soon crowded with natural curiosities and relics,—the combined collections of our father and his Georgian relative, both of whom had a mania for such things. Another room contained our father's valuable library, with its treasures of MSS., occupying twelve folio volumes.

As the two families were shortly after united by the closest of bonds, the villa became a second home to us. Whenever we wanted space for anything we adjourned thither; and regularly, on a Sunday evening, our father had a service in it for ourselves and such neighbours as could join us. It was, therefore, a "Bethel,"—known in heaven as a "tabernacle," in "which the voice of rejoicing and salvation was heard."

It had stood a twelvemonth, when one November day,—just after dinner, as we were strolling about, we saw a burst of flame rise from the kitchen chimney; and the cry of Fire! Fire! Fire! rang from lip to lip. The grown-up part of our community hastened to the spot; the younger folk thought they could do nothing better than run about wringing their hands and crying. I took three sisters, of tender years, and hurried them towards the mill.—I remember, as we ran, a fleet-footed damsel, who had either lost her shoes or cast them off on purpose, went by us like an express-train, and, dashing

over the bars, flew across the fields to call the men who were felling timber in the river meadow.

I and my trio made the best haste we could to the mill, where I deposited them in charge of Bluff's wife, and then hurried back, by a shorter cut, to the scene of terror. Indeed it *was* a scene of terror! As I came in sight, the red-tongued flames darted high and hissed and crackled; and a wild confusion of voices filled the air. I lifted up my heart to God to help us in our time of need. No engines to be looked for,—but few neighbours!—What is done, must be done by ourselves. My brothers had been working like New York firemen; the ladies like Amazons.

From the first, they gave up any hope of arresting the flames, and bent all their efforts to save the property.—They had but a short half-hour for that! It is surprising how quickly the largest wooden structure vanishes when a match is set to it. The furniture was coming out at the doors as if by magic,—single individuals—and those women, dragging out a piano, or a Turkey carpet, or an oaken

cabinet. From the museum windows, shot African horns, preserved butterflies, stuffed birds, shells, crusaders' swords, Norman helmets, Indian tomahawks, Chinese umbrellas, Venetian guitars, ostriches' eggs, South Sea Island war-clubs;—not to mention Whitfield's spectacles, and a pair of battle of Bosworth spurs. From the library windows there was an intermingled rain and hail of bound volumes and loose papers; framed signatures of Oliver Cromwell, Napoleon, and Washington; drawers of coins, commencing with Alexander the Great's and Cæsar Augustus'; rare autographs of the kings and queens of England and their contemporaneous celebrities, covering four centuries,—out they leapt, tossed by invisible hands only anxious to get them from the shelves! How little, Bloody Queen Mary, or the patriot Hampden, or the poet Pope, could have imagined that those letters which they sat writing so quietly on the banks of the Thames, would ever be tossed haphazard under the urgency of fire from the window of a house in America!

Meanwhile the hapless villa was wrapped in

a sheet of flame : And now the inside began to be intolerable.—Those who remained, did so at the imminent risk of their lives. Any moment they may be cut off, or there may be a crash!—We implore them to desist, and escape while it is practicable. But they hold on in spite of our entreaties ; and we have to fetch a ladder and plant it for them ; and then at last, to our inexpressible relief, they appear at the top of it and descend. We felt that they deserved knighthood ; but they had a far richer reward in our applause, and in the satisfaction of having cheated the devouring element of almost everything that was worth saving.

Scarcely were they landed on terra-firma, when the roof fell in upon the upper story, then the upper story upon the ground-floor, then the ground-floor into the basement ;—each successive fall throwing a shower of sparks into the sky,—and then, the pretty villa was not ! In its shapely stead you had a heap of charred timbers, and ourselves,—in a wide circle around, setting amidst our shattered and scat-

tered goods, like forlorn passengers amidst the debris of a wreck.

May I never again be a party to a November bonfire where the Guy is one's own house !

It cast a sad gloom over Brook Farm from thenceforward. That black ruin,—the grave of so much that was sacred and happy to us,—once resonant with the songs of Zion or the laughter of childhood,—was never looked at without a sigh ; and we were grateful to the kindly blackberry-vines when by-and-by they spread themselves over it and hid it from our eyes.

RED-MEN'S GRAVES.

ON a small wooded promontory, jutting out from Bonham's Neck into the East River, were a number of grassy mounds, which always went by the name of "Indians' Graves."

It was a hundred years since the last Indians

left the neighbourhood—and a hundred years in a new country like America, seems as remote an antiquity as the times of the Druids do to modern Englishmen. Our curiosity, therefore, was greatly excited by these graves, and we were most anxious to investigate them. We formed a party for the purpose, including as many antiquarians as we could muster; and, having obtained the owner of the land's permission, set off in boats with the necessary implements. And first we viewed the Tumuli. They were somewhat dilapidated by a century's wear and tear. Two or three were considerably bigger than the others. They were all of an oven shape, rather than the familiar oblong. The tide in the bay rose and fell within a bow-shot of them. There it had ebbed and flowed on the day they were dug, when the tall trees now overhanging them were saplings, or, it may be, not even planted; and there it had ebbed and flowed tens of thousands of times since! High over head a fish-hawk wheeled and whimpered—a mere speck in the azure sky.—Nothing else broke the silence. To the left, the

Salt Sound, with Long Island for its further shore, stretched away as far as the eye could see, covered with lazy vessels and busy steamers, and glittering like a mirror in the morning sun.

So august was the scene, that we felt half sacrilegious in bringing out our pickaxes and shovels.—But resurrectionists must bottle up their sentimentality, and set to work,—and in the cause of science what will not men dare!—It led us to the heartless disembowelling of those quiet graves. Truth to tell, we were thirsting for Indian relics, gold chains, tomahawks, shaggy scalps, pots of mummied wheat, and what not.—But we took care to cover our rapacity with the figment of antiquarian research.

Selecting the largest mound, we commenced operations. The turf was stripped off, and then the mould tenderly removed. When a root interfered, it was cut by the doctor of our company as carefully as if it was a man's leg. Down we went—two, then three, then four feet; when—presto! a spade struck a whity-brown object. The Doctor pronounced it a

human skull. The *savans* crowded round, and the spade was exchanged for the hand. Soon we laid bare a neat head, with abundance of pearly teeth. This was lifted out, and ascertained to be a genuine Indian, of immature growth.—The bones followed. He was sitting in an upright position, with his face towards the West. In his lap were some stone arrow-heads and a rusty knife-blade; below these, an earthen jar, which had probably contained food,—a kindly-meant start for him on his long journey over the endless Prairie!

A second mound, gave us a similar immature skeleton, and that of an animal which we guessed to be his favourite dog, and *quantities of oyster-shells*. Now, really!—*had* he had an oyster supper spread out under his nose in death? The Doctor proposed another theory: the Indians used them for lime,—probably they were put there as a disinfectant: Ergo, *likely enough, these fellows died of the smallpox!*—It is known to have swept the Indian tribes before it as a whirlwind sweeps the forest leaves.—“Doubtless these were a cluster of its

victims; and if so, gentlemen, I should advise you not to handle these remains or disinter any more." Barbarous Doctor! Never take a Doctor with you on an antiquarian pleasure excursion!—He is sure to smell a fever or a plague! We tried to laugh him down.—We declared that it was our confident conviction that they had been slain in honourable battle, and buried in a heap, as fallen warriors should be.—We pictured them leaping into their canoes yonder—paddling over the dancing waves—yelling to each other from the rocks—painting themselves for a moonlight dance! But the Doctor *shook his head*; and it is humbling to think how far a doctor's shake of the head goes! We could not rally our spirits from that rude shock. We proposed to duck the Doctor—to bury him alive—to cast him off in the boat without oars. But none of these would efface the recollection of that eloquent shake of his head and that magic word *smallpox*. So we allowed ourselves to be advised by him.—We laid the poor bones in their several graves, and covered them up

again. Faithfulness, however, compels me to narrate that the Doctor managed to smuggle the best of the teeth into his pocket.

Not long after this, the remnants of the New York State tribes—who are kept and taught by the Government on what is called the Indian Reserve—were permitted to make a visit to their old hunting-grounds. They were a fine set—chiefs, squaws, and papooses, wrapped in gaudy blankets, and ludicrously feathered and red-ochred. They sold mocassins and baskets of their own manufacture; and everybody went to pay them respect. Under the guidance of an old Indian Medicine man, whose father had thoroughly instructed him in Indian topography, these interesting pilgrims found their way to the identical mounds on the promontory, and confirmed the Doctor's surmise.—It was a Cemetery, *not* a battle-field.

THE DONKEY AND THE DEER.

My younger sisters had a present made them—a donkey; a live donkey; a white donkey—snowy white; a French donkey. The friend who gave it, brought it over from Havre for his own daughters. Measuring it by common donkies, it was large, and as shaggy as a polar bear in July; indeed, could you but have cropped his ears and bobbed his tail, there would have been little difficulty in passing him off as such in a travelling menagerie.

I said he was French,—born and bred in Normandy; and we used to speculate whether or not he *hee-hawed* in French, and whether his thoughts about beans and thistles took shape in that tongue. We often cross-questioned him on the point,—“Parlez vous Français, Louis?” and sometimes he nodded; but then, quite as frequently he shook his head negatively.

We were accustomed to ride him by turns or in tie. He must have wondered at the

crowd of boys and girls following him, all eager for the moment of exchange. He might have said, "Why can't they be as happy on their own legs as on my back; especially as they can get on faster, and save themselves the trouble of digging their heels into my ribs!" But there is no accounting for juvenile tastes. Many a long ramble we have taken him through the woods in search of wild flowers for the May-queen, or for a load of evergreens for Christmas-day decorations; and pretty enough he must have looked returning from such excursions, laden with our gatherings, and surrounded with our joyous selves.

Occasionally three of us would get on his back at once, and even a fourth be clambering up; when his meekness "would no further go." He would kneel down and begin to roll. But on the whole he was a patient, long-suffering ass, and would bear with a great deal before he resorted to a donkey's *ultimatum*.

I have mentioned Christmas-day. On that day he was in special request. It was his high privilege to bring into the dining-hall no less a personage than Father Christmas himself, with

venerable beard and holly crown ! Then, as he was our guest, Louis was put into gray stockings and enveloped in a flowing mantle, whilst his bridle was decked with ribbons and bonbons ; and no ass since the one in a lion's skin was grander. I don't know whether he entered into the sport ; but he stood the laughter and hustling as if he did, and we had harder work to get him out—when his room was more desirable than his company—than to get him in.

Now and then, too, he was pressed into a popular wax-work exhibition in the same dining-room. I have myself bestridden him as the “ First Consul on his Arab charger ; ” or “ the Duke of Wellington on his war-horse Copenhagen ; ” or “ Alexander, the World-Conqueror, on the renowned Bucephalus.” In such exhibitions he would stand as quiet (this, by the way, is a donkey's *forte*) as if he really was a production of Madame Tussaud's ; the only symptom of life being the winking of his downcast eyes !

He fed with the cows, and formed a romantic attachment for a diminutive no-horn, not much taller than himself.—There he was,

grazing by her side from morning to night. It may be that she reminded him of some "love of a donkey" from whom he had been torn in the pastures of Harfleur, and whose last hee-haw was still a soft thing in his memory. I recollect he was fearfully agitated one afternoon, when this little cow managed to swallow a fishing-line with a cluster of hooks on it, and had like to be choked in consequence. We heard her coughing and, discovering the cause, cut the line, and thrust an arm down her throat. It never afterwards troubled her or us.—I suppose; in process of time, some Pater-familias was amazed to find fishing-tackle in a sirloin of beef!

There was a date when Master Louis very nearly lost his situation. A neighbour, half a mile off, bought a donkey for *his* children. This was a vulgar slate-coloured animal (as we guessed), out of a costermonger's cart. By hook or by crook Louis and this slate-coloured brute got wind of each other's vicinity, and began inter-telegraphing across the valley. We put their hee-haws into words:

Louis. Comment vous portez-vous, mon brave ?

Brutus. Please repeat !

Louis. Vous êtes mon cousin-germain, n'est-ce pas ?

Brutus. Don't understand you !

Louis. Savez-vous nager ?

Brutus. Why can't you bray English ?

Louis. En use-t-on bien avec vous, mon ami ?

Brutus. What an ass you are !

Louis. J'aurai le plaisir de boire à votre santé à l'abreuvoir.

Brutus (laughing). Hee-haw, hee-haw !

This was amusing, but when it went on hour after hour, with scarcely an instant's cessation, it was more than a joke. We rushed out, drove Louis into a stable, and kept him there, on hard fare, till he forgot the slate-colour and the slate-colour forgot him.—It would never have done to have the Rector's donkey in brawling correspondence with all the donkies of the parish, even though he did bray in French.

But about the deer. It was icy December. Though the sun shone brightly, the frost held ; the snow lay a foot deep on the ground. We were looking from our window, when, to our astonishment, a couple of deer,—a

fine antlered buck and his sleek spotted doe, came trotting up the carriage drive, now sniffing the air, now tossing their heads, now staring at the house, now frisking over a wheel-rut. We agreed not to disturb them, but just see what they would do. Suddenly the familiar "hee-haw" rang out, and Master Louis appeared on the verge of the terrace, challenging these new and unearthly comers! "Hee-haw" again. The deer stopped, pricked their ears, and gazed! "Hee-haw" again. The deer beheld him, and were alarmed. Louis, however, was as alarmed as they were. His hair stood on end and his tail was stiffened, and when he hee-hawed again it was noticeably with a quaver. Still he *did* hee-haw again; and the deer wheeled and retired. This encouraged Louis; he sought the terrace steps, went down them at a cutting pace, and tore after the deer, hee-hawing vociferously at the top of his lungs! The deer bounded yards high as they flew before this monster-pursuer.—Was it a tiger or a rhinoceros? Louis,—with his nose in a line with his backbone, galloped on, snorting out hee-haws and smoke like a steam-gun!

The deer were completely panic-stricken! Louis was aware of that fact, and chased them with reckless ardour far down the public road, and through the village—in short, until he satisfied himself that, be they what they might, —ghosts of beasts or beasts themselves, they would never again invade his privacy!

He returned from his *sortie* panting and blowing as if his sides would burst.—It was a prodigious effort; and it was well for his hide that he was never called to repeat it.—Donkeys were not intended for staghounds.

Louis survived to a good old age; indeed, he may be alive now for aught I know. They say, that you never see a dead donkey. But for their own sakes, I trust that they do get that release which a pitiful Creator has provided for all the weary and heavily laden.

And so we will hope that long ere this, the grass has grown over poor Louis, and that he is not now toiling on—as so many of our English donkeys are, through an immortality of kicks and cuffs.

DUCK-SHOOTING.

WITH the first cold weather came the wild ducks. They breed in the lagoons of Florida. When the young birds have got their full plumage, they start away for a higher latitude, leaving their parents to follow at their leisure when they have finished their moult. Here is a wonder of God's providence, that these newly-hatched ducklings, with the eggshells, so to speak, still on their backs, should know the direct route to the northern feeding grounds,—the identical haunts,—the bays, rivers, and marshes, where their fathers and mothers will rejoin them in a month or two's time! Well may the chief poet of American Nature sing of the waterfowl:—

“He who from zone to zone
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone
Will lead my steps aright.”

On they come,—these jolly unsophisticated ducklings, by the thousand—how, when, and

where, nobody knows. There they are, some fine frosty morning, — Black, Golden-eyed, Old Wives (so called from their ceaseless chatter), Widgeons, Shell-drakes, Teal, and others, swinging about on the salt waves. You have nothing to do but to get into your yacht, lay a tack within fifty feet of them, and then fire as they sit and stare at you. They are so “unaccustomed to man” that you may almost run them down before they will rise.—Their “tameness” would be “shocking,” if they did not make such an uncommonly nice first course with cranberry sauce!

The Black duck, or Coot, is the largest and finest eating. Like chimney-sweeps as they look, they do their work in the dark. During the night they float up the creeks inland; and, if you are up bright and early, you can get a shot at them as they fly back to the open water. I have stolen out with a friend, walked to Berens Bridge, and got snugly ensconced behind a buttress, before the stars waned. The bridge,—a third of a mile in length, spanned Lancaster Creek at its debouchment into the Sound. So the tides swept under it furiously;

and the streaked bass—a fish weighing from ten to thirty pounds—leapt at the fisherman's bait from the whirling foam.

From behind our buttress we keep peeping up the creek, but it is too dark to see anything as yet. There is a whistling of wings overhead though!—The chimney-sweeps are abroad. Another and another and another flock pass over invisible. How tantalizing! But here are the first rays of morning, and here at the same moment are a phalanx of coots steering straight for us. Our long range,—charged with cartridges, is brought to the shoulder, and the fatal finger goes to the trigger.—Ha!—they are wide awake: they smelt powder; they have veered and gone over the woods! Here are some others.—“Too high.”—But they may be the last.—Here goes!—Bang! bang!—both barrels into the midst of them, and I jump up to watch the effect. The feathers fly.—A brace of them shake themselves, lag in the rear, quack faintly, and begin to descend.—Cleverly they manage to drop wide of the bridge; and directly they have touched

the water they strike out and make off. It is plain that they are only winged; but they must not be lost. I run to the toll-gate-house, and borrow a skiff. Pulling hard in this, I scarcely overtook my chimney-sweeps. As I neared them, they dived, and when they reappeared it was at such a distance as satisfied me that if I intended to secure them I must use my gun again.—A barrel apiece, rolled them over.

Speaking of diving, reminds me of a rare wild-duck chase which an "old wife" once led myself and a brother. It was a heavenly day. The air was intensely exhilarating. The Sound was as smooth as a mirror. We were rowing about in search of the picturesque, when I spied a wounded "old wife" on our quarter. She was crouching with her head on the brine, and if there had been the slightest ripple we should not have observed her; but now there was no screening herself. We steered towards her, and she went under like a flash; but, as the water was so still, we could trace her course by the air-bubbles which escaped from her as she sped along. One of us

stood in the bow, and gave the word to the oarsman—larboard or starboard, according to the direction of the bubbles. By this clue we followed her so closely that, when she came up to breathe, we were not a boat's length from her, and she had to go under again almost as soon as she opened her eyes. Our object was either to tire her out by giving her no rest, or to get a rap at her with an oar. We pressed her, therefore, unceasingly. For three-quarters of an hour she had not more than ten seconds at a time for breathing. We had an infallible index to her submarine doublings.—We stuck to the bubbles. Occasionally we made a thrust at her; but she was too quick for us. It was marvellous how she kept it up.—I could not have believed that any bird was capable of it; it would have distressed a fish.—Indeed, with her drenched plumage, she looked as much like a fish as a fowl. She must have swam many miles submerged! At last, by manœuvring, we drove her towards the shore; and there, when the water shoaled, we could see her darting along ahead of us, a yard beneath the surface, wings and legs both going as for very

life. Amongst the sea-weeds, we easily captured her; but we agreed that she had won for herself a more euphonious name than that of "old wife."—We christened her The Diving Bell(e), and we decided that, if ever she was eaten, it ought to be with the greenest of green peas.

There are several phases of duck-shooting. I used to be fond of setting wooden stools or "dummies" within gun-shot of the beach. I have fastened live ducks there by a string and stone; but they got frightened and struggled, and acted rather as scarecrows than decoys. The "dummies" did best; they sat tranquilly and noiselessly, and were sufficiently good imitations to deceive unwary travellers.—They would turn aside to have a look at them, or exchange a compliment, and—ere they discovered the hoax, I sprang up and took my tithe from amongst them.

But the grand battue, was the event of the season. It always was arranged when the ducks were most plentiful, but rather too shy for shore shooting. Two or three neighbours agreed to meet us, each with their own boat,

in a broadish channel between two islands. Adown this channel the ducks were known to pass at daybreak in their flight from their roost to their breakfast. There we were to waylay them. It was dark and misty when we four left for the rendezvous. Embarking in two boats we found the fog thickening. Presently we got separated. We could hear each other's voices, but rejoin one another, we could not.—How we roared with laughter at our fruitless endeavours to bring it about! Now, we went after them, and when we thought we were at the spot, there they were shouting to us in the place we had started from! We seemed to be going round and round in circles.—We had tragical ideas that we were drifting out to sea, or that the whole world had sunk suddenly, and that there *was* no land. It was a great relief when a brother informed us, through a speaking-trumpet, that he had hit on something solid.—Here are the despatches delivered through the fog,—“Holloa! we have struck a rock!—It is large and high.—I am getting on to it.—I am on terra firma.—I can't tell what it is,—island, promontory, or con-

tinent.—It may be a whale's back.—It may be the point of Cape Horn." A pause. "Hol-loa! I have fallen and sprained my ankle.—I am fainting,—come quick!" Guided by these exciting communications we managed to reach the unfortunate explorer, and carry him moaning to his boat.—With true sportsman spirit he refused to give in. And now the fog lifted, and we made straight for the channel. There were our neighbours before us. We took up our position, and anchored with a spring on our cables. The six boats fairly commanded the pass.—They were a chain of posts from shore to shore. Arms and ammunition were prepared. Whilst that was in process, the ducks began to go over our heads; but it was too dim for shooting. We watched with a fervency which cannot be described for a sight of our feathered prey. By-and-by you hear,—“ I got a glimpse of those! I shall let fly at the next.” “ Mark east! Mark east! Here's a flock coming!—Now then!”—And there are a dozen flashes and a dozen reports, and the ducks splash into the water like hailstones. We slip our cables and

pick them up,—at least the dead ones; we have no time to waste on the wounded. Hardly are we at our moorings again, when another flock bear down upon us, and are greeted with a similar fusillade. I saw a neighbour knock down fourteen out of a flock and bag the greater part of them! The finest practice, however, was a little later, when they charged in twos and threes, like skirmishers. Then you could pick out your bird and bring him a prize almost to your boat's gunwale. It has happened that they have fallen right into the boat's bottom, smashing half the bones in their bodies. I found this a serious objection to shooting them from the island itself.—They fell such a flump on the stones that they were a mass of mangled flesh. After sunrise, they see the boats and avoid them, so we sound the retreat. The subject of the sprained ankle has retired from the field previously.—He considers personal torture and "sport" incompatible. Besides, his own sufferings quicken his sympathies.—How can he have the heart to sprain a duck's ankle when he is enduring such anguish from his own!

Would it not be well if all sportsmen felt the force of a similar *argumentum ad hominem* oftener?—Might it not prevent those needless inflictions which are so apt to accompany the fowlingpiece and the fishing-rod? The man who looks carelessly on animals' pain ought to have his corns trodden on by the first elephant.

THE MIDNIGHT TRAMP.

A MYSTERY YET TO BE UNRAVELLED.

WE four brothers slept together in a roomy attic. One night we were disturbed in the following extraordinary manner:—

It may be well to premise that, on going our shutting-up round, we found the back door open, and the wind driving in at it in a very burglarious manner. As we looked out into black Erebus, we were awe-struck; and it was a great relief to have the key turned and the bolts fastened. About midnight I

woke my brothers, with the astounding intelligence that there was some one walking on the roof! Two of them declared that they were conscious of having heard it in their sleep, and that it had given a hideous turn to their dreams. What should be done? In the first, and safest place, it was decided to lie still and listen. It comes! Tramp!—very faint! Tramp!—a little louder! Tramp! tramp!—still louder! Then a deliberate—Tramp! tramp! tramp! tramp! right over our heads. We lay silent as tomb-stones, till it died away in the distance. Then—so the rumour ran next day—“the Attic heroes—who always sleep upon their arms—started up, and would have looked at each other, but it was pitch dark.”

Before we could utter a word, Tramp! tramp! tramp! tramp! back again. The fellow was taking a brisk quarter-deck walk between the chimneys! “Horrors!” we all cried. My eldest brother did the most sensible thing; he struck a light.—It is wonderful how the crack of a lucifer staggers a ghost! It was now asked whether the ladder, which had been

standing against the coach-house the day before had been padlocked? A tremulous voice expressed its confidence that it had not.

Upon further consultation, it was agreed, that as one pleaded a touch of lumbago, and another—the youngest—might be considered a non-combatant, the two elders should turn out and explore. The sound here changed its character, and we, who were under the clothes, compared it to a man removing a pane of glass, and scraping the putty with a carving-knife; and we urged our brothers to hurry and see.

After searching every cupboard upstairs, they descended with chattering jaws to the second and ground floors, and took the following notes:—"Old Carlo (an ancient setter) dreaming before the kitchen fire—a mouse deep in a jelly in the pantry—the hall lamp out, and smelling (it should have been burning—this was a bad sign)—doors all secure—(good)." Then they took two pokers, and poked under the sofas and easy-chairs—(laudable; but how about the roof?) Returning to the hall, they were greatly shaken by the appearance on the floor of a white moving

object, accompanied by a violent gnashing of teeth.—It proved to be Carlo, in quest of a troublesome flea! Then in the nursery they stumbled over a little footstool, and in the morbid state of their imaginations leapt several feet high, under the impression that it was alive and snapped at them. “But the roof!” Well, it was yet unexamined.—How *could* you examine it, except by craning your head upside down from the dormer windows—but that wanted a neck as long as a heron’s! or going outside and climbing the lightning-rod hand over hand, with the chance of receiving a kick in the stomach when you landed; or—and *that’s* the rub—ascending the belfry, which rose considerably above the house, and consequently commanded a view of the whole roof. This belfry *must* be mounted. They began it with a cold shudder. They toiled up its rickety steps, shading their candle with the flaps of their dressing-gowns as they passed each narrow window. They reached the short ladder; then the leaded trap-door, through which you wedge yourself, and so arrive on the look-out. Here they paused. Many objec-

tions presented themselves to any further explorations in that quarter. It was blowing a gale, and the probability was, that the instant they lifted the trap their candle would be extinguished. Again—supposing they *did* get on the look-out, what could they see?—There was neither moon nor stars. Further—supposing they could see—if there was a designing person there, he might bob behind half a dozen stacks of chimneys. Or, once more—supposing they actually caught sight of him, what could they do?—Were they to go hopping over the peaks of a seven-gabled house in their night-caps and slippers after a Dick Turpin or hobgoblin, who might riddle them with a revolver or vanish in a blue light?

Still, they always said that they should have done it, if an odious owl had not at that critical moment given utterance to a peculiarly melancholy hoot.

This settled the matter. They retreated in—it is hoped—a dignified manner, and soon after re-entered the bed-room.

And what, meanwhile, had become of the brothers, who had so gallantly volun-

teered to keep the beds warm? Suffice it to say that we were unmutilated, with our heads covered, holding our breath, and our hearts beating audibly—the invisible sentinel having marched to and fro several times during the absence of our beloved mates. This fact roused their zeal afresh, and throwing open the dormer windows, they *did* crane their heads out, twisting them upside down, in the futile expectation of getting a glimpse of him.—In proof of this intrepid *reconnaissance* they both rose in the morning with stiff necks.

Nothing more could be done. The candle was left alight, and we all endeavoured to compose ourselves to sleep. But with the first silence, the tramp re-commenced—now slow and solemn, as if meditating—now rapid and angry, as if chafing at having been disturbed; and the singular part of it was, that it ceased directly we spoke.

The proposal to take a survey from the belfry was again brought up by myself (the non-combatant), but it was unanimously rejected. It was argued, that as the great unknown seemed content with the roof,

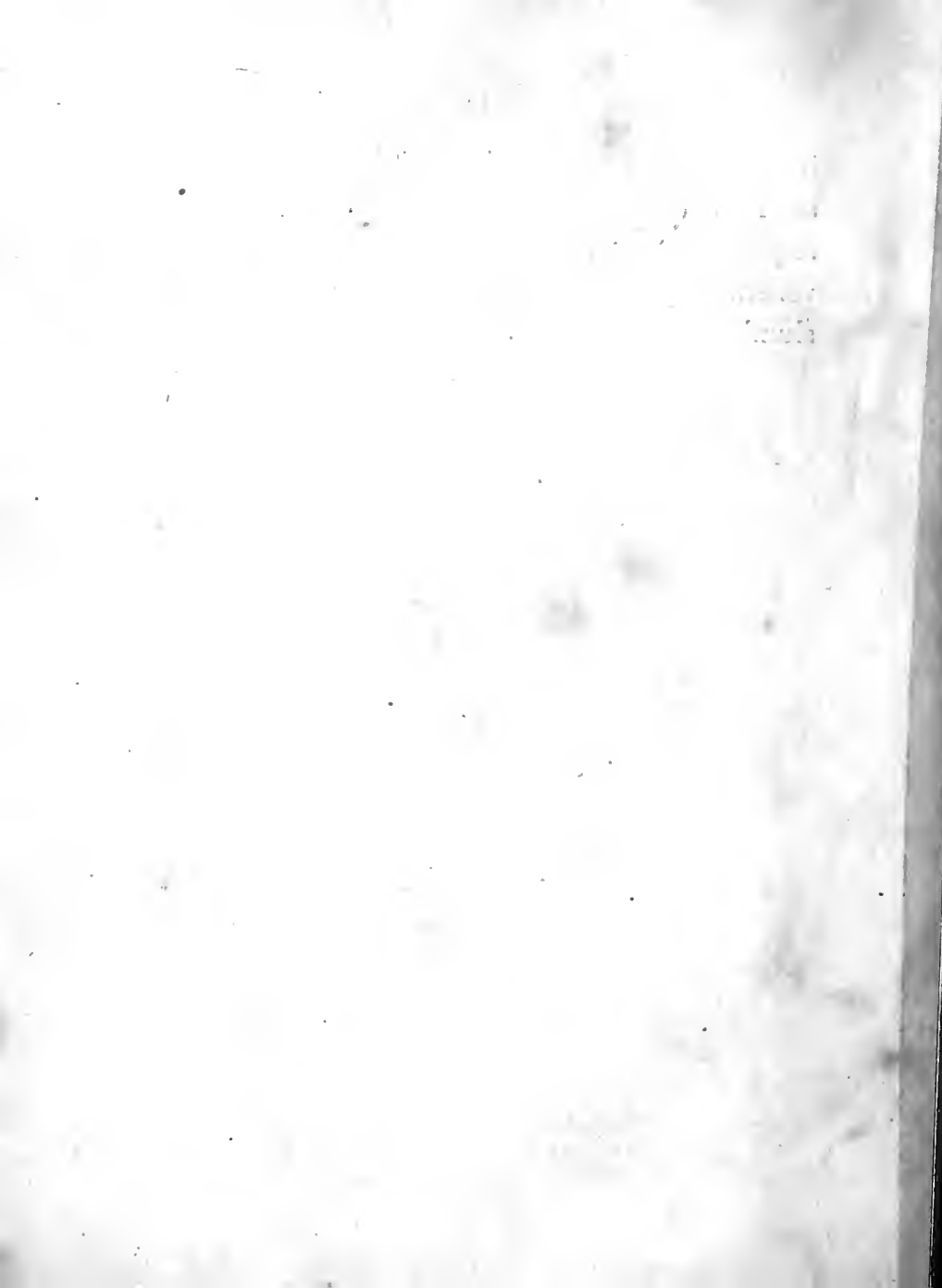
he might safely be let alone, especially as all the ingresses above and below were defiantly barred. But if he *should* attempt to break through our ceiling, it was settled that he should drop into a cold bath, and there be despatched without mercy.—*I* was to hold the candle, whilst the others hacked him with razors!—His scalp (if he was not bald) was to ornament our museum.

It was a grim resolve.—But depend upon it that we should have carried it out. Our arrangements thus completed, we wished each other good night, and blew out the candle in token of our determination to go to sleep—which we did, despite the ghostly roof-walker, who renewed his unearthly promenading as we spoke our last word.

We never arrived at a satisfactory conclusion about it: conjecture, however, was busy. Some affirmed that it was our own peacocks; others, that it was squirrels jumping over the beams. We had it hinted that it might be the cook—(we used to worry her frightfully) in a trance, hunting for her lost tartlets. We ourselves thought it no laughing matter, and felt

it our duty to maintain that it was either an Indian Sachem revenging himself for his sequestrated territory, or the spirit of a venerable progenitor mounting guard over his slumbering grandsons !

THE END.



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